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LECTURES AND REMAINS

OF

RICHARD LEWIS NETTLESHIP

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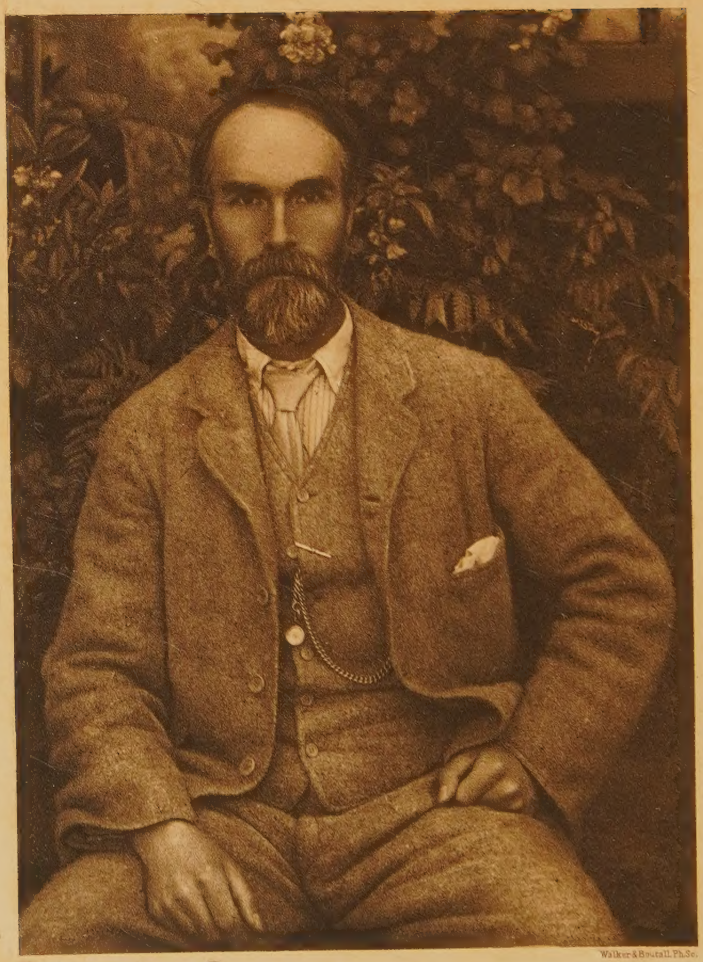
VOL. I.



Walker & Boutall, Ph. Sc.

Yours ever

R. L. Stevenson.

1889.

PHILOSOPHICAL LECTURES AND REMAINS

OF

RICHARD LEWIS NETTLESHIP

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

1846–1892

EDITED, WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES: VOL. I

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PREFACE

The persons jointly responsible for the publication of these volumes are the editors named on the title-page, and Professor C. E. Vaughan, of the University College of South Wales, one of the executors of Nettleship's will.

For the preparation of the first volume, the form in which everything in it finally appears, and the notes contained in square brackets, Mr. Bradley is solely answerable. Mr. Benson is in like manner solely answerable in the case of the second volume.

In addition to the matter here published, a considerable mass of material was prepared by Mr. Vaughan from reports of Nettleship's lectures on the history of Logic and of Moral Philosophy. But it was decided not to make use of this material, as the more original parts of the lectures could not well be separated from other parts

which, however well adapted to their purpose, seemed less characteristic of the author.

Explanations regarding the different portions of which these volumes are composed will be found prefixed to them. The only portion which was written for publication is the essay on 'Plato's Conception of Goodness and the Good.' The 'Miscellaneous Papers and Extracts from Letters' are, almost without exception, of the nature of private and probably hurried correspondence. The remainder of the first volume, and the whole of the second, consist of redactions of lecture-notes. In regard to these, a few words are required here in addition to the remarks of the editors. Nettleship's own notes were, as a rule, very scanty, and have been of use only in occasional passages. The editors have therefore attempted to reproduce the lectures chiefly by comparison, selection, and combination of reports by pupils who heard them in various years towards the end of Nettleship's life. They have endeavoured, as far as possible, to preserve the original phraseology and the forms of the sentences; but, especially in difficult passages, they have sometimes been compelled to choose between various possible interpretations, and even occasionally to represent what they believed to be the author's meaning without professing to reproduce his words. They have also modified or removed,

where they detected them, such unguarded or ambiguous statements as naturally occur in extempore lecturing. They are, of course, answerable for the correctness of the references inserted.

No one can feel more keenly than those responsible for the publication of these volumes how difficult was the task of determining what should be printed, and how likely they are to have erred in their choice. They will only say that they have been guided by anxious consideration of three questions,—what was most characteristic of the author, what promised to be of most use to readers, and which of the proposed selections Nettleship himself would, to the best of their judgment, have accepted or rejected.

Their thanks are due to many old pupils of Nettleship, who lent their reports of the lectures; to several friends, especially the Master of Balliol, Mr. Bernard Bosanquet, Mr. R. G. Tatton, Professor J. Cook Wilson, and Professor John Burnet, who gave advice as to the selection of lectures for publication; to Mr. Vaughan, to Mr. George Macdonald, Lecturer in Glasgow University, to Mr. J. A. Smith, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol, and to one another, for assistance given in various ways in the preparation of these volumes.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

A DETAILED biography of one whose main work was that of a College tutor will not be expected or required by the reader of the following *Remains*. I shall merely recount the chief events of Nettleship's outer life, and shall then attempt such a description of his mind and character as may explain in some degree the great influence he exerted on his pupils and friends, and the impression of 'uncommonness' which he almost invariably left even on acquaintances.

Lewis Nettleship (for he was called by his second name) was born on December 17, 1846. His father was Henry John Nettleship, a solicitor of Kettering in Northamptonshire; his mother, Isabella Ann, daughter of the Rev. James Hogg, of the same town. Among his elder brothers were Henry, who became Professor of Latin at Oxford, and who died in the summer of 1893; John, well known as a painter; and Edward, well known as an oculist. Lewis was educated at Uppingham School, and was deeply influenced by his head-master, Edward Thring, for whom he retained a very strong admiration and affection[1]. He early showed unusual ability, and for some years before he left Uppingham was head

[1] Some of the correspondence which passed between master and pupil during Nettleship's undergraduate years is likely to be published in Mr. G. R. Parkin's forthcoming memoir of Thring.

of the school. At this time, we are told, he appeared 'old for his age,' sober and sedate; but he entered readily into 'all the fun,' and practised the school games, not with marked ability, but with a characteristic desire to do everything as well as he could. Those who met him as a man have often unconsciously echoed the remark made by an acquaintance in the year 1864—'though he was very quiet and reserved, one felt the better for being in the room with him.' Curiously characteristic, again, in turn of phrase as well as in substance, are the words which he is remembered to have used in addressing the school on an occasion when Thring, according to his custom, had left it to the senior boys to bring an unknown offender to justice. Nettleship 'asked the lads to remember they were trusted, and called on them to be worthy of the trust. He ended his appeal to the sense of honour by saying, "Uppingham is a little place, and I dare say you fellows think it doesn't very much matter how we treat either our masters or one another; but at least it shall never be said, if I can help it, that Uppingham boys are either liars or cowards. Those who agree, show their hands." And the whole school rose and cheered their head boy to the echo. One remembers how, ever after, one seemed to look to Nettleship as a kind of impersonation of truth and bravery'[1].

Nettleship entered for the Balliol Scholarships in November, 1864, and came out head of the list. He went up to Oxford in October, 1865, and began a career of brilliant University successes. In addition to minor honours, he won the Hertford Scholarship in 1866 and the Ireland in 1867, and was generally recognized as the

[1] H. D. Rawnsley, in *Good Words* for January, 1893.

'best man' of his year. He was not, however, merely a 'reading man.' He rowed in the Balliol 'Torpid' and then in the 'Eight,' and entered fully into the life of the College. His quiet manner, and the thoughtfulness, delicacy, and refinement, which were as evident in his face as in his speech, did not prevent him from being eminently companionable. He was perfectly free from conceit and priggishness, keenly enjoyed the humour and 'chaff' of undergraduate society, and was not one of those unhappy beings who never acquire nicknames. At the same time, throughout these years his nature and mind, which were not precociously developed, and which (as he afterwards thought) grew very slowly, were continuously deepening. His undergraduate life was at times full of intellectual and emotional struggle; but to outward appearance he advanced steadily and calmly, and he was too thoughtful and modest to leave a record of phases and crises among his contemporaries. Doubtless the intellectual influence which he felt most strongly was that of Green, who was just then becoming famous in Oxford and bringing a ferment into the philosophical studies of the abler men. This influence Nettleship quietly absorbed, and it did much to mould both his thoughts and his character, although he was hardly so ardently excited about philosophy as were some others among Green's pupils, and it was never natural to him to regard Green's teaching as a kind of gospel which it was his mission to spread. Even at this early time, too, the individuality of his mind was as marked, if not so obvious, as its receptiveness; and the essays which he wrote as an undergraduate bear scarcely a trace of that imitativeness in which enthusiasm for a teacher is apt to show itself at first. He owed much, also, to the kindness

and the wise advice of Jowett, who was his tutor; and the influence of his brother John was probably at least as powerfully felt as that of any of his elders in Oxford. His most intimate College friend was H. S. Holland, now Canon of St. Paul's.

In the summer of 1869 Nettleship went in for his final examination, and astonished his teachers and fellow-students by failing to obtain a first class. This mishap, like some other startling reverses of that time, was attributed in part to the effects of Green's teaching, or, in other words, to the incapacity of certain of the examiners. Nettleship himself thought that his failure had, at any rate, additional causes, 'even including rowing.' He regretted, however, neither the teaching nor the rowing; and therefore, though, on account of the College and Green and his old school, he was 'vexed not to have managed better'[1], the mishap did not further trouble him, and he declined to follow the advice of a friend that he should enter for a fellowship that happened to be vacant at another College, and try to prove that he was still invincible.

In the autumn of 1869 he competed for a fellowship at Balliol, and was elected. The question of his future profession had naturally been already considered. He had thought of going to the Bar, and also of becoming a schoolmaster, but had put aside both these ideas in favour of another. His love of painting, and his intimacy with his brother John, had attracted him to the plan of preparing himself to write upon art; and his interest in philosophy only stimulated this desire. What he meditated was a study of all the main branches of

[1] These words, like most of the quotations in the present sketch, are Nettleship's own.

art, in their connection with religion and the history of ideas. He had thought of pursuing his design in London, where he could combine it with work among the poor, and where he hoped to find an intellectual air less irritating and more vitalizing than that of Oxford. The idea was not abandoned when, on gaining his fellowship, Nettleship began to take work for the College; and for some little time he remained in doubt whether he should stay more than a year or two at Balliol. What chiefly decided the question was the marked success of his first lectures (on the *Republic* of Plato), and the value set upon his presence in the College by Jowett and Green on the one side, and by the undergraduates on the other. But he was also influenced by characteristic feelings. He was acutely conscious of the immaturity of his mind and character; the thing he most needed, he felt, was training; and for training the Oxford work would stand him in as good stead as any other. Besides, then and always, he put a good deal of faith in the precept which bids a man do what lies nearest to his hand.

Nettleship remained a tutor of the College until his death. His energies were given therefore to work which, however valuable, cannot be eventful, and could hardly be briefly described. He had gained his reputation mainly in the field of classical scholarship, and he continued for a long time to take part in the teaching of Latin and Greek composition. Even after he gave this up, he was kept in touch with the junior undergraduates through the Balliol custom of weekly essays. But from the first his chief work lay in philosophy; and after Green's appointment to a professorship he became the principal teacher of this subject, which is studied by

men reading for the final classical examination. In addition to his duties in the way of lecturing and discussing essays with pupils, he held the post of Junior Dean, and sometimes, during a part of the year, that of Senior Dean. He continued, also, to take a lively interest in the Boat Club, was always a welcome guest at bump-suppers and College concerts, and made full use of the gift which he possessed of establishing an unconstrained and equal relationship with men younger than himself. Thus an unusually large proportion of the undergraduates felt the effect of his presence, though it was in those who studied philosophy that his influence struck deepest. Something will be said of the nature of this influence in a later part of the present sketch ; but I believe it would be agreed by most of those able to judge that, from the time of Green's retirement from tutorial work, the strongest intellectual and spiritual force felt within the College issued from Nettleship.

The subjects on which he most frequently lectured were Logic and Plato's *Republic*, and his courses on these subjects had a high reputation in the University, and were largely attended by out-College men. He occasionally lectured also on Aristotle's *Ethics*, and on the history of Moral Philosophy. The greater part of the lectures on Logic was historical, dealing chiefly with Aristotle and Bacon. It will be seen, therefore, that, except in the introductory portion of that course, Nettleship confined himself to the interpretation of authors, if not of particular works. His practice in this matter was due quite as much to his own choice as to the character of the University examinations; and the prominence given in those examinations to Greek philosophy, as compared with modern, was not distasteful

to him. Though his position in regard to the main philosophical issues was well defined, he had very little desire to propagate his own opinions; he wished chiefly to help others to think, and to bring their minds into contact with those of great men. And for the beginner, at any rate, he thought Plato and Aristotle better than modern writers of any school, because the Greeks put their questions more simply than the moderns, and because they were less apt to lead the student prematurely into controversy on burning questions. In the practice based upon these views Nettleship's teaching differed somewhat markedly from Green's. It does not follow that he estimated the achievements of modern philosophers less highly than Green, but he regarded the teaching of philosophy more strictly from an educational point of view, while he no more subordinated it than Green did to the exigencies of examinations [1].

When Nettleship began to teach, he wrote his lectures out at length; but before long he abandoned this practice, and spoke from very scanty notes and without verbal preparation. This plan necessarily involved much labour; for, instead of repeating or re-casting in any one year the material used in some preceding year, he had always to construct his lectures anew. But he thought the labour well spent; indeed, if he borrowed from an old pupil a report of his lectures, it was principally in order to guard against saying what he had said before. And the result justified him; for his mind continually advanced instead of being hampered by its past, while his

[1] He had, on the other hand, no sympathy whatever with the idea that a teacher who pays some regard to the fact that his pupils are going to be examined must needs 'cram' them for their examination. On the question whether his own lectures were, as a matter of fact, 'good for the schools,' there seems to be a difference of opinion among his pupils.

hearers felt that every subject he discussed was fresh and living to him. The distinguished success which he achieved on this method implied a considerable gift of speech; and that he possessed such a gift was, I believe, very evident on the few occasions when he addressed an audience outside the lecture-room. In his lectures he was able without loss of freedom to speak slowly enough to suit those who wished to take full notes. He spoke with interest but equably, seldom emphatically, and never with any attempt at impressiveness. He rarely hesitated, and was little troubled by the tendency, commonly observed in lecturers who use but few notes, to expand unduly or to be seduced into parenthetical remarks; indeed it seems probable that for the majority of his hearers he often expanded his ideas too little. On the other hand, his habit of returning in one lecture upon an idea introduced in another was evidently intentional.

The two heaviest of the literary undertakings on which Nettleship entered were interfered with by unforeseen interruptions, and were only accomplished in part. The first of these was historical. In the spring of 1873 he gained the Arnold Prize for an essay on the History of the Normans in Italy and Sicily. He was led to write for the Prize partly by the characteristic idea that his success might compensate the College for his failure in his final examination. His essay was very highly estimated by Professor Stubbs and the other Examiners, and they urged him to pursue the subject and to publish his results. The enterprise cost him much labour. His memory was accurate, but not particularly strong; his historical reading had been comparatively slight; he found himself constantly driven from his immediate subject, which was large and difficult enough,

into wider fields; and the instinct of the scholar and artist made it impossible for him to work hastily or at second-hand. His vacations from 1873 to 1879 were mainly devoted to his projected history; and to it he gave also most of a year's holiday which the College granted him in 1875. In this year he travelled a good deal in South Italy, visiting the scenes of the events he was to narrate. He stayed for some time working at Naples, and there he made one of the most valued friendships of his life, that with B. Zumbini, now Professor of Literature at Naples, and an eminent writer[1]. By the year 1879 he had made considerable progress with his work. Large materials had been amassed, and a part of the book was written, when his advance was arrested by the news of Freeman's intention to write a history of Sicily, and by a proposal that he should therefore confine himself to the history of the Normans in Italy. Though the arrangement involved the surrender of the most fascinating part of his subject, Nettleship readily adopted it; but naturally it checked him in his course, and for a time, as will be seen presently, he turned to philosophical writing. This being finished, in March, 1882, he was hoping to be able to return before long to his history; but in that month Green died, and the work of writing a memoir and preparing for publication the lectures of his friend occupied most of Nettleship's leisure for some years. He gradually came to recognize that it was beyond his power to combine both philosophical and historical writing with his College

[1] In *Macmillan's Magazine* for November, 1878, there is a paper by Nettleship entitled, 'An Italian Study of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.' The 'Study' referred to, together with one not less admirable on *Paradise Lost*, will be found re-published in Prof. Zumbini's *Studi di Letterature Straniere*, 1893.

work, and he therefore abandoned the enterprise on which he had spent so much time and thought, hoping that his friend and colleague, A. L. Smith, would some day be able to use his materials and carry out the design of the book.

That Nettleship should give so much of his leisure to a historical work was surprising to many of his friends, who thought that his natural bent was in another direction. He himself was accustomed, more than half seriously, to deny that he had any decided natural bent; or rather, it seemed to him that 'there were several things that he could do pretty well, and nothing at all that he could do well.' Within certain limits he was curiously indifferent as to the mode in which he should put forth his energy; and, if the College had been mistaken enough to wish it, I believe he would readily have consented to teach history or 'classics' instead of philosophy. In any case, he became thoroughly interested in his essay-subject. The adventurous and stormy characters whom he had to describe appealed powerfully to one element in his own nature; he loved Italy, too; and though he had no tendency to substitute reflection for narrative, or to compel the facts into the frame of a theory, many passages in his manuscript prove that his researches in history gave plenty of scope to his philosophical imagination. This manuscript shows the conciseness and the verbal felicity which marked his writing, and in addition a power of producing rapid and vivid effects for which philosophical composition offers little room; but an unrevised historical fragment is ill fitted for separate publication, and Nettleship's executors, after taking the opinion of experts, decided to leave his manuscript unprinted.

In the summer of 1879, when his historical work was suspended, Nettleship had written, for a volume called *Hellenica* and edited by his friend and colleague Evelyn Abbott, his essay on the Theory of Education in the *Republic* of Plato. With the purpose of the volume, which was to illustrate the undying significance of Greek thought and literature, Nettleship was in entire sympathy. Although he recognized the importance of the more purely historical and critical questions involved in the study of Greek philosophy, he was never keenly interested in them, and cared deeply only for what is permanent in that philosophy. He could not regard Plato as a fascinating relic of antiquity, nor could he use Plato's theories as a mere cover for the discharge of his own. In his eyes Plato was a man of extraordinary genius, to whom the world around him presented problems—among others, an educational problem—which, in spite of many differences, were fundamentally identical with those that confront an Englishman in the nineteenth century; and at the same time it seemed to him that the Greek writer drove straight to the heart of those problems with a force and directness less easily attained in the rich confusion of modern life. Hence his first object was, by a sympathetic and almost affectionate intercourse with the mind of his author, to re-create in imagination the occasion and the mental processes which had led to the formation of Plato's theories, to ascertain, as nearly as might be, what made him feel this and that, and why this and that seemed to him so important. And then he asked himself in what manner and with what modifications Plato's ideas could be applied to the changed conditions of our own time. In attempting to answer this question, Nettleship did not abstain from criticism; but

in his criticism he still held to the method of sympathetic interpretation: he did not oppose to Plato's opinion an opinion of his own, but rather tried to show how a true development of Plato's own ideas would sometimes lead to conclusions other than those which appear in his dialogues. Doubtless such a mode of treatment was not the best way of conveying to the casual reader an impression of brilliant originality, but it gave to Nettleship's work a truthfulness and a sureness of touch which are nothing less than invaluable to serious students.

The method adopted in the essay in *Hellenica* was followed by Nettleship in his memoir of Green and in all his teaching. The notes of his lectures on Aristotle, on later Greek philosophy, on Bacon and other modern writers, show that he applied it indifferently to all, without regard to the degree of his own sympathy with the ideas which he was endeavouring to expound. There is no more of negative criticism in his treatment of Hobbes or Hume than in his treatment of Plato or Spinoza. He approached the works of a philosopher just as he would have approached any man of acknowledged genius whom he might have met face to face. Such a man's ideas, he thought, may be one-sided or imperfectly connected, but they are likely to represent some real and important aspect of truth; and the first thing to do, if not the last, is to get, by sympathetic study, at those parts of human experience which he realized with peculiar force, however unsatisfying the theory which he wove round them.

After the completion of the essay in *Hellenica*, Nettleship took part, with Green and some of Green's old pupils, in the translation of Lotze's *Logik* and *Metaphysik*, published under the editorship of B. Bosanquet in 1884.

His share of the work was the translation of the first book of the *Logik*. Meanwhile, he had undertaken the second of his main literary projects. He was invited to write, for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a small book on Platonism, as a companion to Prof. Wallace's volume on Epicureanism and Prof. Capes's on Stoicism. A large book on Plato would have suited his way of working much better; but he was attracted by the very modesty of the plan, and not less by its difficulty; he felt that it would be more of an achievement to express himself in 250 small pages than in two or three large volumes. Although he was to write for the general public, he did not intend to avoid Plato's metaphysics; his aim was 'to give some idea of what was in the man's mind in its original, unmitigated, form, without apology or attempt to soften it down for modern culture.' He began his task by analyzing for his own use all the dialogues of Plato; and by the summer of 1883 he had finished at least one of the five sections of which the book was to consist. This was a chapter on Plato's Ethics, somewhat similar in character to the *Hellenica* essay, though naturally less elaborate in its treatment of the various dialogues. But even before the chapter was complete, it had become evident that the proposed limits of the book were likely to be greatly exceeded; and the publishers, who had allowed the title to be changed from 'Platonism' to 'Plato,' were unable to sanction such an extension of the plan as Nettleship now thought desirable. He therefore made some changes in the whole design, and began to reduce without mercy the matter already composed. But during the next five years his leisure was mainly given to a more pressing duty (to be referred to presently), and, although he continued during

these years to work at intervals on his 'Plato,' he made but little progress in the composition of the book. In the Long Vacation of 1889 he was able again to give it his whole attention, and he was occupied with it till the end of his life. But, as he penetrated more deeply into Plato's mind, and as his own mind grew, he was compelled once more to modify his plan; and, although some of the notes he made for the 'Plato' after 1889 probably show his philosophical power as adequately as anything in his lectures or essays, they were merely notes for his own use, and at the time of his death but few passages of finished composition had been added to the chapter which is printed in the present volumes.

The duty just alluded to arose out of the death of Green, in March, 1882. After the publication of the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, which Green had left nearly finished, it was decided that a part of his remaining MSS. should be edited and published, together with a memoir. No one else could be so competent in all ways to undertake this task as Nettleship, who (so far as it was possible for any man to do so) had filled Green's place at Balliol, and for whom Green had felt an admiration as great as his affection. In his editorial duties Nettleship received help from various friends—very great help from Mrs. Green; but there remained much laborious work, which he executed with characteristic thoroughness. The *Memoir* of Green was published in the third and last volume of the edition of his works in 1888. Nettleship was better content with it than with anything else that he wrote; he even admitted that some of it was 'rather well done.' The memoir is markedly impersonal both in tone and in substance, and it was intended to be so. Nettleship felt that the thoughts and actions in which Green had

openly and deliberately expressed himself were the truest exhibition of his personality; and by dwelling on them he was able to give a very distinct impression of that personality without lingering on the details, or breaking through the reserves, of private life. The remark sometimes heard, that he did not succeed in making Green's philosophical ideas more easily intelligible to the general reader than their author had left them, is probably true as a statement, but it is surely unreasonable as a complaint. To 'popularize' these ideas would really have been to substitute for them something which would have been nearer to the reader's everyday thoughts and, for that very reason, less valuable. So, at any rate, it seemed to Nettleship. He made no attempt, therefore, to popularize Green's teaching; but he succeeded in simplifying it by bringing into relief the unity which pervades it, and which connects with Green's central ideas the outlying questions on which he so persistently dwelt.

The *Memoir* of Green was Nettleship's last publication. In Oxford, where his reputation was so great, there is probably an impression that in the way of literary work he accomplished less than might have been expected; and he himself felt that he had 'done very little.' Whatever he had done, he would have felt this; and if he wrote comparatively little, there were many causes besides those for which he might take himself to account. Among these, it is quite a mistake to reckon a failing which is supposed to be characteristic of gifted Oxford dons. Nettleship was by no means irresolute or over-fastidious in composition. Certainly he was not fond of second-rate work; but his dislike of producing it was free from morbidity, and he was untroubled by the dread of

committing himself[1]. On the other hand, he had no strong impulse to literary composition, and took little pleasure in it; his temperament, also, was not that of the mere student or author; and, except when there was an obvious need for prompt action, he was perhaps somewhat deficient in the power of 'putting a thing through.' He was also impeded by a marked peculiarity of his mind. He could produce good work rapidly under pressure (for instance, his article on Green's philosophy, in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1882, was written very quickly); but when he was making his greatest intellectual advances he appeared to himself to work very slowly, and at such times he certainly composed very slowly. His conversation on philosophical subjects was then extremely interesting, but one could see that his whole mind was in ferment, and that, as he said, he was not 'fit to write.' Naturally, these times of restless progress were apt to come towards the end of the Long Vacation, when he had recovered from the effects of his College work; and they were cut short by the return of Term. In fact, the main reason why he did not write more was that he regarded his College work as his first business, and gave himself to it so ungrudgingly that, although he was on the whole a healthy man, little troubled by pain or ailments, the bulk of his energy was exhausted in it. And, considering what he made of this work, it is not clear that we have any right to wish that he had diverted more of his force to composition. His life was ended in its prime by an accident; but I see no reason to

[1] I have often heard it said that Langham in *Robert Elsmere* is a portrait of Nettleship. To any one who knew Nettleship the idea is merely ludicrous; but it seems a pity that one or two tricks of speech and manner, which could hardly fail to remind Oxford men of him, should have been associated with a character so contemptibly unlike his.

doubt that, had this not been the case, his five and twenty years of teaching would have been followed by a period of philosophical authorship as concentrated and as successful.

Of the events of Nettleship's life little remains to be told, and the most important can only be touched on. After the year 1880 his greatest happiness and unhappiness arose from a passionate attachment which was not returned, and which lasted till his death. He met the suffering it brought to him bravely and unselfishly; and, although he was saddened, he did not allow his sympathies to be narrowed or deadened. Several inducements, of which the strongest was his desire to make a home for his mother, led him, in 1882, to give up his College rooms and take a house. He lived for the last ten years of his life at 7 Banbury Road, next door to his friend Mrs. Green. He saw perhaps less than he had previously done of his colleagues and of acquaintances in Oxford, and he spoke with regret of this loss; but I do not gather [1] that the change diminished his influence within the College, and he found a fuller satisfaction of the need for affection in his daily life with his mother, his devotion to whom was none the less beautiful because it brought with it its own reward. The change put within his reach, too, pleasures granted only in part to the inmate of a College. Relatives, old pupils, and other friends [2] visited the house in Banbury Road. He worked in the garden regularly, and with a characteristic mixture of enjoyment and conscientious-

[1] I should mention that I left Oxford at the end of 1881.

[2] Among the friendships formed or strengthened during the last ten years of his life, I cannot help naming that with Mrs. G. W. Prothero, to whom every one who loved him must be grateful.

ness. A Dandie Dinmont, 'Jenny,' became his constant companion. He saw more of children, of whom he was fond, and with whom he had a very taking way. And, lastly, I must mention his love of music. He had eagerly welcomed the Sunday evening recitals in Balliol Hall, which his friend, C. B. Heberden, had organized about the year 1877; and he took an equal interest in the concerts which succeeded these recitals, when Mr. Farmer came from Harrow to Balliol in 1885. He occasionally sang at the College concerts; and at home, where his mother, while her health allowed her, used to accompany him, the singing of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms became a constant practice with him, which he more than once referred to as almost his 'greatest comfort.' I do not know that he cared less for painting in his later years than in his earlier, but he certainly cared more for music. For the sake of hearing great compositions he would go out of his way as he never would to see a play or any kind of spectacle, and the hearing of some music came to be for him, as he said, 'almost the only reasonable form of worship' [1].

When, as a young man, Nettleship thought of living in London, and of writing on art, he thought also of working among the poor; and no doubt he would have carried out this intention after he had given up his College work. But during his Oxford life he abstained entirely and deliberately from attempting anything of the kind; nor did he ever take any part in the civic or

[1] The words were used after he had been hearing Cherubini's Requiem. I may add here that the sum subscribed by Nettleship's colleagues, pupils, and other friends for the purpose of a memorial, was used to found a scholarship by which a student of music is enabled to spend some years at Balliol College before completing his musical training or pursuing his profession.

political affairs of the city. Work among the poor would probably have been congenial to him; he had a natural feeling of equality, and was perhaps more at his ease with people below him in station than with the average person of culture, who frequently irritated him. He was also full of kindness without being at all sentimental. On the other hand, he had no liking for 'affairs,' and not much turn for them; and he had less than the usual interest in politics. This does not mean that he was indifferent to political or social movements, as artists and men of letters not seldom are. He sympathized warmly with democratic ideas, had some strong admirations (e. g. for Mazzini and for Bright), made up his mind on important questions of the day, and used his vote [1]. But the interest he took in current politics was a matter more of duty than of inclination. He had little of the spirit which makes many Englishmen open the day's paper anxiously or eagerly, and none of the spirit which makes many others rejoice in party conflicts as they do in football-matches.

Nettleship never (except perhaps in boyhood) had a passion for books, and in the last fifteen years of his life he read neither very much nor very widely. As a boy and as a young man he was fond of history; later, his favourite reading was biography and poetry, with an occasional novel. He was rather a slow reader and had a difficulty in skimming; partly perhaps for this reason, he was less interested than most intellectual men by second-rate books, and he was intolerant of second-rate

[1] So far as I know, his vote, in University and in national politics, was invariably given on what may be vaguely called the liberal side. He hesitated a good deal in 1886 about Home Rule, but ultimately decided for it. He was always inclined to what seemed to him the courageous policy.

work in philosophy. Indeed, in the last few years of his life he read little philosophy except Plato and Spinoza, and he more than once spoke of the best poetry as the only literature that he found very much worth reading except as pastime. By this he doubtless meant that the best poetry seemed to him to contain most of the kind of new experience that he chiefly valued. His appreciation of poetry was catholic, but his favourites were few. He was fond of George Herbert, of Browning, and of Whitman, though he would not have ranked any one of them very high. Dante and Shakespeare were probably the poets most congenial to him; but, as he had never studied Dante much, he could not turn to him with ease in odd hours, while he read Shakespeare more and more. The books he took with him on his last Swiss tour were a volume of Spinoza containing the *Ethics*, and the shilling selection from Browning.

From early days Nettleship had been fond of travelling; and in the last ten years of his life he went once to Italy (where in earlier days he had often been), twice to Norway, several times to Switzerland or the Tyrol, and twice to Greece, on one occasion making an extremely trying and somewhat hazardous journey on foot through Albania and Thessaly. Though he seldom spoke of them, famous places and works of art were much to him, and some extracts printed in this volume record his impressions of Athens and Florence; but he liked best of all to travel under conditions which made it natural for him to live roughly, to exert himself strenuously, and to depend upon himself; and partly from necessity, but probably quite as much from choice, he often travelled alone. He could not live without doing something 'violent,' as he called it; he felt also

a recurring need to get away from society, and to dispense with the 'swimming-belts' of regular habits and duties, public opinion, the aid of books and friends.

Contact with nature seemed almost always to revive him. He had something of an artist's enjoyment of form and colour, and when he was watching a sunlit landscape his face wore a peculiarly happy expression; but perhaps his strongest impulse was to feel in nature 'an elemental force in whose presence man finds peace by escaping from himself'[1]; and this impulse led him most often to moorland or mountain districts. For mountains especially he had always felt (and these were strong words for him to use) 'an intense love tinged perhaps by fear'; and the very fact that he was doubtfully conscious of a mingling of fear with his love attracted him the more to mountain-climbing. In all things that which called for courage, as well as effort and skill, appealed to him most. One may even say that in Nettleship's experience all the virtues tended to appear in the shape of courage, just as to another they may all appear as forms of unselfishness; and it was natural to him to think of most moral weaknesses as kinds of fear. To prevent misunderstanding, I may add that I never saw any sign that he was more inclined to timidity than most men.

At various times he had done some climbing in the high Alps. In 1890 he went to Switzerland with two friends who were first-rate mountaineers, and he much enjoyed the necessity of attempting the utmost of which he was capable. The next year he went alone, first to Grindelwald, and afterwards to Saas Fee; did all the work and attacked all the difficulties that lay within his

[1] *Memoir of Green*, p. xviii.

powers; and came home looking alarmingly thin, but feeling full of vigour and also of ideas. In August, 1892, he again went to Switzerland, expecting a friend to join him in a short time. Settling at the Montanvert Hotel, he engaged two Chamouny guides and made various ascents, in which, for the sake of practice, he took the place on the rope usually assigned to the first guide, and to a large extent declined the aid commonly offered in abundance to the amateur. On those who met him at the hotel he left, as he always did, the impression of helpfulness and gentleness, and of being 'uncommon.' His guides became much attached to him; he was 'si gentil, si aimable'; he treated them 'as brothers.' On an expedition, they noticed, he was generally silent in the valley, but 'as soon as they got up into the high air he seemed to be another person, so joyous and full of song and talk.'

The sum he had laid aside for climbing being almost exhausted, he determined, by way of a last ascent, to go up Mont Blanc by the Aiguille and Dôme du Goûter. In this expedition he lost his life. On Wednesday, August 24, his guides and he went up the Aiguille, and at midday left the top and made for the Dôme. On their way they were met by a storm of wind and snow, violent and intensely cold. Their tracks were quickly effaced; they lost their bearings; and, as the light began to fail, they cut out with their axes a hole in the ice of the mountain-side. Here they spent the night. Nettleship acted in his last hours as his friends would have expected of him. During the night he was cheerful; the guides were too depressed to sing, and he sang to them. In the morning he ate, and pressed them in vain to eat. After a while, as the storm showed no sign of abating,

he proposed to start; some such words as, 'Il faut faire quelque chose; mourir ici ce serait mourir en lâches,' were almost his last. The guides objected; but he answered only, 'Allons,' and stepped into the storm, and they followed him. They had thought him the strongest of the three; but it was not long before he fell and, when they ran to him, grasped them each by a hand, and died. The storm lessened an hour or two later, and the guides escaped, though one of them was in poor health for some months afterwards. Nettleship's body was buried at Chamouny. The inscription on the tombstone ends with the quotation, chosen by his mother, 'He maketh the storm a calm'[1].

Those who saw something of Nettleship without becoming intimate with him were often at once impressed and puzzled; and it was possible to know him pretty well without losing much of this feeling of bewilderment. That he was a remarkable man was quite evident; but he belonged to no obvious type, and, while his character was transparently sincere, it united qualities so unlike that a first conception of it was liable to be greatly modified on further acquaintance. He was plainly very serious and thoughtful; quiet, self-possessed, and somewhat retiring; courteous, frank, and simple in manner; grave, occasionally melancholy, in expression. But to some he seemed repressed, in-

[1] Fuller details regarding the expedition may be found in the English newspapers of the days following August 25, 1892, and in Mr. Rawnsley's paper in *Good Words*. There is no reason for dwelling on them in this slight sketch, when one has to pass without mention many incidents of Nettleship's life which would illustrate his character at least as well. They have some importance of another kind for those who are interested in mountaineering.

different, or even austere, while others found that he talked with interest and ease, and, if he did not often say humorous things himself, showed a quick and hearty enjoyment of humour in others. One person would say that he was a philosopher; that he regarded things—even the most ordinary things—in a strikingly original way, as though he saw them from some hidden central position of his own; and that, taking life so seriously as he obviously did, he was probably somewhat stern and stoical in moral judgment. Another might notice that he did not use philosophical formulas, would even put them aside with a certain impatience, and would discuss anything that concerned human nature with the interest of a novelist, with almost startling frankness, and with a ready sympathy for wellnigh any kind of passion or difficulty. He would have winced to know it, but it is the fact, that he gave the impression of living on a height, and of carrying something of an ideal atmosphere into the most every-day occupations; yet, if there was little exuberance, there was no reservation in his enjoyment of sunshine and laziness; of eating and drinking; of walking, rowing, bathing, games; of singing, talking, and mirth. Few can have met him without being struck by his modesty, and even by a certain diffidence and indecision in expressing an opinion; yet he was often decided, quick, and plain-spoken, and he could be irritable, combative, and brusque. In the years of his early manhood there was a look of quiet placidity in his face, in his latest years an expression often of hard-earned but settled peace; but, at almost any period of his life, the marks of the strain of work, and of incessant inward struggle, would sometimes be evident even to a stranger.

The various impressions just described answered to various aspects of Nettleship's character, and I shall do best if, at the cost of repetition, I dwell on some of these more at length. The gentler and happier side of his nature was more quickly apparent in his earlier years than afterwards; and probably most of those who knew him only as an undergraduate or a young tutor would be surprised to hear that he ever struck any one as austere or even melancholy. Nor did contemporaries who, after a long interval, saw him again in later life, find him changed in this way, though he seemed to them to look 'lean and intense,' and less peaceful than in youth. The change that passed over him was possibly not greater than that which middle-age often brings, and a very simple circumstance made it appear greater than it really was. In the later time his dark eyes, deeply set under a projecting brow and thick eye-brows, were the most noticeable feature of his face, while his mouth was almost hidden. In earlier days, when he wore no beard and moustache, the delicate and mobile lines of his mouth, betraying every transitory touch of sympathy, pleasure or amusement, gave to his face a look of sensitiveness and a peculiar sweetness. This look was in entire harmony with the gentleness and modesty of his address, while the upper part of his face, which was rather immobile, left the impression of intellectual power and of a patient but somewhat stern sadness.

His modesty was one of the most essential and beautiful traits of his character. It was native, and was only increased by the consciousness of intellectual power. To compare his own gifts with those of others was unnatural to him; he was not competitive, and had hardly any temptation to be vain. He went out into the world, as

Thring had bidden him, 'not as a lord and judge, but as an humble child seeking wisdom.' 'Wisdom,' philosophy, deepened in him the sense of mystery, the need of worship, and the feeling of his own littleness; and habitual intercourse with the greatest minds kept him constantly aware of the difference between their powers and his. I have heard him say many 'irreverent' things, but I never once saw him in an irreverent state of mind. This humility towards all that was above him was the source of much of his influence over younger men, who felt it the more because it was linked to abilities and achievements far above their own. It put conceit or assumption to shame, encouraged the timid, and led Nettleship's pupils to regard him as a fellow-worker.

To this modesty, which was a spring of strength alone, were joined a diffidence of nature and a disinclination to self-assertion, in which strength was mingled with weakness. These traits were often obvious at a glance. Nettleship's hesitation in beginning to give an opinion, his preliminary disavowals of knowledge, and his qualifications of statement, amused his pupils and formed the grain of truth round which a body of College legends gathered. To a large extent they were mere unconscious tricks of manner. So far as they were more, they arose from his constant sense that his knowledge was fragmentary and his insight limited; from the perception that different minds, however unequal in power of vision, still catch glimpses of different sides of truth; and from the fact that, until he began to think, he was often unaware that he had an answer to the question put to him, while it never occurred to him to suppose that it was his duty as an educator to pretend to have an opinion when he had none. His diffidence led some people to imagine

that he was not only in the best sense humble, but had a lower estimate of himself than of them; and in this they were generally mistaken. If 'humility' means this kind of self-depreciation, he neither was nor, on the whole, appeared to be humble; indeed, his readiness to treat seriously the opinion of a beginner was frequently touched with irony, and there was sometimes traceable in his manner to intellectual men of his own age his feeling that they were as far as himself from being great or wise. Still it is true, for good and for ill, that it cost him an effort to assert himself. He had little of the temperament, the gifts, and the defects, of a leader and ruler. Though he influenced men greatly, he scarcely set himself to influence them, and was not inclined to direct their lives for them. He could take and hold his own way, but he was not eager—perhaps was too little eager—to induce others to join it. He hated conflict, and was ready to sacrifice a good deal to avoid the waste caused by friction. Yet I do not know that he ever sacrificed what he thought essential; and though the effort which it cost him to oppose or pain those whom he admired or cared for was sometimes visible in a certain roughness of manner, neither in his private nor in his more public life did he flinch from ungracious tasks.

It would be misleading to describe Nettleship simply as reserved or unsociable, and he was not exactly shy. But it is true that in society he was often silent and appeared uncomfortable. The surface of social intercourse was not his element: after a short course of 'saying pleasant things to pleasant people' a feeling of unreality and futility came over him and made him dumb. This does not mean that he could only interest

himself in intellectual subjects. Indeed much of what is called cultivated conversation was as unsatisfying to him as the merest gossip, and he was quite at home with people who had never heard of philosophy. If I may so put it, an intelligent or affectionate savage would have suited him, and a philosopher or poet would doubtless have suited him better still; but in proportion as people were further removed from one of these extremes without approaching the other, their attraction for him diminished. Thus he could be happy with any child of nature, of whatever nationality, rank, or degree of culture; and he would talk readily with any one keenly interested in his own experience or occupation, or in human beings, or ideas, or works of art. But in the middle region of political or literary discussion he moved with an air of forced interest or suppressed discomfort; and, when he felt a barrier between his own mind and that of another, the feeling that conversation was useless tempted him to withdraw into himself or (more rarely) to become combative. Such dumbness or combativeness arose almost wholly, I think, from irritation at his own inability to enjoy the good of the moment; and he made many efforts, if not many successful ones, to master what he himself regarded as a weakness.

When his society suited him, his conversation was remarkable in more ways than one. It was not brilliant, and he never attempted to make it so; but it was original. His mind was eminently unconventional, and, unlike some unconventional minds, it had no ruts of its own. He approached a subject as if he were ignorant of the received views, and wished, by observing it steadily, to learn something of its nature; and his ideas about it, while as far as possible from being eccentric or

wrong-headed, were often surprisingly fresh and pregnant. They presupposed, however, in his fellow-talker a willingness to press into the matter, and also to supply considerations which Nettleship himself thought too obvious to be mentioned. His omission of these was sometimes a cause of bewilderment, as he appeared to be maintaining, as the whole truth, what was merely a partial view. Another marked quality of his conversation was its intellectual sympathy. He seemed not to compare an opinion of his own with the opinion of another, but to adopt the idea offered to him and to win from it new suggestions which often transformed it. His constant study of Plato's dialogues no doubt strengthened this tendency, but it was a part of his nature. He did not care for argument. To 'talk philosophy' meant to him the attempt of two minds to arrive at new results in company, these results being something which neither of the explorers had foreseen, and in which neither could have distinguished his separate contribution. In this kind of joint search after truth I have known no one at all equal to him.

It is evident from the reports of his pupils that these characteristics of his conversation reappeared in his tutorial teaching. In discussing philosophical questions he appeared to ignore the recognized views and the recognized terminology with which his pupil had probably some acquaintance; he attacked the matter as if it were something perfectly new, into which he was making his way for the first time. At the end of two years a pupil might have heard not a sentence from him about some of the most famous controversies, yet he found himself familiar with the points really at issue. When he read his essay to Nettleship, he found his tutor

assuming that he had something of value to say, and that he meant what he said ; and this was equally taken for granted, whether he had advanced some hopelessly confused view, or some wilful paradox, or an idea which he imagined likely to be welcome, or one which he expected to hear condemned. In any case he was led into a joint attempt to examine the position stated, and to get from it nearer to the truth which he was believed to be anxious to find. He recognized, at once or afterwards, the intellectual sympathy which had enabled his tutor to conduct this process ; and indeed it may be said that Nettleship's intercourse with his pupils differed from his conversation with older men only in being deliberately adapted to an educational purpose, and, of course, in being less unrestrained. It is no exaggeration to call him a master in the art of educating able men in philosophical thinking. If his art ever failed him, it must have been in dealing with the less able among his pupils. He probably left some of them doubtful of his own position, possibly doubtful whether he did not regard all philosophies as equally true.

The same doubts were occasionally felt by strangers of his own age, who surmised from his conversation that, with regard to theories, he was an eclectic, and that in moral judgment he was over tolerant. Neither of these impressions was correct ; he had not even the tendency to think all ideas equally true, or all modes of life and action equally good or bad. But no doubt his instinct was to look for the truth or goodness of everything, and to thrust nothing aside as insignificant or worthless. His mind was naturally synthetic. He had a strong feeling of the unity or continuity of human experience, and was more inclined to dwell on the presence of one

principle in many manifestations than upon the defects which make any one manifestation of it imperfect. In regard to morality he did not, as a rule, use the language most familiar to Englishmen. It was natural to him to think of better and worse rather than of right and wrong; of the attainment of an end, the fulfilment of one's possibilities, the increase of one's being, rather than of obedience to law, or conscience, or duty. Antitheses like those of duty and pleasure, or self and others, were not to his mind; like all antitheses, they were apt to provoke him, so that he would startle a neighbour with whom he might be in substantial agreement, by declaring that every one does in the end what pleases him best, or that there is no action on earth which may not be good or may not be bad, or that for a man's self there is no difference between things called great and things called little, though there is plenty of difference between what is hard and what is easy. Thus he sometimes seemed, especially to a listener unused to philosophy, to be denying the most obvious distinctions, or perhaps to be maintaining the heresy that good and evil differ only in degree. In reality no one could have held more strongly that the difference between them is absolute; what was alien to Nettleship's mind was the pretension to be able to separate the world into two parts called evil and good, or the attempt to restrict the manifestation of goodness to its generally recognized forms. Doubtless, he would have said, it is *chiefly* in these forms that human nature is able to realize its possibilities; but that is no reason for attempting to bind it down to them.

Nettleship's sympathy with almost any passion, or with any action which, however unusual, seemed to

spring from a real conviction, was connected with this mode of thought, and also with his own inward experience. There was nothing really strange in its being combined with an exceptional seriousness, patience, gentleness, and dutifulness. These traits were obvious; the passionate aspiration and effort of his life were less evident, but not less characteristic. He struggled vehemently to attain singleness of purpose, his 'one pearl of great price,' and to make a harmony of the different elements of his nature. But these elements were very diverse. Among them were strong animal impulses, and something wild and untameable, which found no satisfaction in the limits of his habitual life, and made him feel, when he escaped from that life, that some day he should leave it for ever, although it, too, answered to a no less urgent need within him. Nor could he, like some men, flatly deny the justice of these demands of his nature, or feel that they were wholly alien to the spirit which drove him to seek for truth, and to love and serve his fellows. Hence, while he was as far as possible from undervaluing the great typical virtues which form the basis or substance of morality, he sympathized keenly with any strenuous effort to reach the good of life, however unlike the direction taken by it might be to the recognized order; and when an action seemed to him to embody this effort, he could not acquiesce in hearing it condemned merely because it was not easy to apply to it one of the common terms of approval, or because it was easy to affix to it one of the common terms of blame.

> Let a man contend to the uttermost
> For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

—the spirit of these lines appealed to him. The readiness

to find good wherever there is a full pulse of the soul drew him to Browning and to Whitman, and was one of the reasons why Plato and Spinoza attracted him most among philosophers. 'He seems to me,' he wrote of Plato, 'to have more of the eternal human nature in him than any one else except Shakespeare.'

It was a natural result of Nettleship's way of thinking that the unity in his ideas and character was more easy to feel than to understand. It was felt by those who knew him that, in everything which he said or did, he was emphatically himself, that he brought into the little things of life the same spirit that appeared in his best thoughts, and that he did what was common in an uncommon way. But few of his friends would have been able to say in what centre his thoughts met, or what system they formed, or to predict with entire confidence what his view of a given question would be, or how he would feel about any particular occurrence. Thus the unity and connection so obvious in the lives and ideas of men like Mazzini or Green (I name them because of Nettleship's admiration for them) were in his case far less visible. He himself would have been the first to laugh at the comparison, and to say that the reason of the difference lay in the fact that these were much greater men than he, and knew their own minds much better. But the reason did not lie solely here. To say nothing of his never having set himself to express his ideas in writing, it lay also in the complexity of his nature, his impatience of limitations, and the continual effort, which was so characteristic of him, to bring a larger and larger experience into the focus of his inner life. Absurdly exalted as the claim would have sounded to him, there

was in him the impulse to appropriate, what Browning, on his higher plane of genius and energy, had the impulse to express, the various experiences of the philosopher, the scholar, the artist, the man of action, the philanthropist, the lover, and even the saint. At the same time what he longed for, and perhaps felt most hopeless of attaining, was something of the simplicity of the child or the great man. The lines most frequently on his lips were Goethe's couplet:—

> Nur wo du bist sei alles, immer kindlich;
> So bist du alles, bist unüberwindlich.

Feeling intensely the unity of experience and the presence of the whole in every part, he was comparatively little interested in dwelling on the connection of the parts, or in demonstrating that the aims of artist, philanthropist, and philosopher are ultimately one, while he felt that the way for a man to realize his whole self was to throw his whole heart into each thing that touched him, and to make of each thing all that it was capable of being [1].

Some other traits in Nettleship's character seemed to be connected with the philosophic strain in his nature; for instance, his disposition to bring himself into positive relation with views of the most different kinds, and (if Plato was right [2]) the habitual gentleness with which his

[1] The following words, from Nettleship's discussion of the *Philebus*, are very characteristic of his own feeling: 'If the end of our being is to be, to be the utmost we are capable of being, then the higher the constant level at which we can live, the less the energy which we have to spend in escaping the pain of depression, the more each moment contains in itself, and the less it borrows from felt contrast with a lower past or a higher future, the more nearly do we approach the full measure, the full beauty, the full truth, in which, according to the *Philebus*, the principle of good is manifested.'

[2] Nettleship was fond of the passage referred to, *Rep.* ii. 376.

occasional irritability or brusqueness formed so odd a contrast. He was also in a remarkable degree, and in a peculiar way, 'impersonal' in feeling and in expression. I do not mean merely that he was very disinterested and free from touchiness, personal resentment, and the like; but it was more than usually easy to him to regard things from a general point of view, and, in speaking of them, he was accustomed to ignore their effect upon his own feelings. Even in matters where he or his friends were most deeply concerned, he maintained the attitude of a dispassionate and, one might almost say, of an indifferent spectator with an ease and a naïveté which was sometimes comical as well as beautiful. He would speak of the harm done by the teaching of philosophy, of the possible decline of his College or his country, of the troubles or the death of a friend, of his own sufferings or his own shortcomings, always with seriousness, no doubt, but still as though he were a 'spectator of all time and all existence,' anxious only for the truth; and it is easy to fancy him discussing his own death as though it did not affect him personally at all. Statements like these may give to those who did not know him a strange impression, perhaps even the ludicrously false impression that he was affected or priggish; but the peculiarity of manner to which I refer was too characteristic to pass unmentioned. Perhaps, also, it may have led strangers to suppose that he was apathetic and likely to be too quiescent. But in reality the personal feelings which he ignored in speaking of things simply as they are, were warm enough, and he would have been the first to fight against the avoidable evils which he so quietly discussed. Balliol, for example, had not in his eyes the glamour it possesses for many of its sons, but he was as ready to

work for his College and as devoted to it as any of them could be. As a friend he was not only true but affectionate, and untiring in helpfulness. Indeed, to be helpful to those he loved, and, I may almost say, to any human being who needed him, was one of the keenest of his pleasures. Perhaps it was a pleasure all the keener because his feelings were not easily expressed in look or tone or spoken words. And if this is true of his affection for others, it is quite as true of the pleasure he took in their affection for him. He showed such pleasure less than most men, but he certainly felt it more. To be disliked by any one, however poor an opinion he had of the person, was painful to him. He had a longing for sympathy from those whom he liked which most of them can never have guessed; and perhaps even those nearest to him never fully realized, while he lived, that his delight in being loved was as simple and strong as a dog's or a child's.

It remains that something should be said of Nettleship as a student and teacher of philosophy. Readers will prefer to gather for themselves from these volumes a notion of his philosophical position, or at least of the ideas on which he dwelt most. Of the former, I need only say that he was in substantial agreement with the idealism represented first and most powerfully in Oxford by Green. He was very sensible of the difficulties of this point of view, and did not expect to see them altogether removed; but he was convinced that they were not to be avoided by falling back upon easier theories and that their solution, so far as it lies within the power of the mind at all, must be sought not in giving up idealism but in pushing it farther. He thought also that critics were apt to forget that the question is not

merely whether a certain theory is wholly satisfactory, but whether it does not interpret and harmonize our experience better than any other. With all his admiration for Green, however, his own mind was framed on another model. In his handling of questions he scarcely ever reminds one of his old tutor; and he took exception to some of Green's language, though rather because he thought it likely to mislead than from disagreement with what he believed it to mean. This applies especially to some of the statements in Green's works regarding nature and the difference between nature and mind. Students of philosophy will notice in these volumes[1] how frequently and emphatically Nettleship recurs to the continuity of all existence; and an extract from a letter written towards the end of his life may indicate the constant direction of his thoughts. 'I think,' he writes, 'I shall end my days as something like a Spinozist[2]. At least I get more and more to feel that there is absolutely no difference in principle between what is called physical and what is called spiritual, and that if one can understand a triangle one can understand oneself.' Many similar expressions occur in his later letters. They do not mean that he was inclined to reduce something higher to something lower, but rather that he believed himself to find more

[1] Particularly in some of the *Miscellaneous Papers and Extracts from Letters*. However slight and hasty these may be, they seem to me to represent him more adequately than his lectures or even his essays, in which the subject, or again the predominance of an educational purpose, often prevented him from emphasizing his own view or dealing fully with the most difficult questions.

[2] Some readers will perhaps object that in that case he would not have ended his days as an 'idealist.' If so, it will be safe to say that he was and remained in substantial agreement with the type of philosophy represented, with differences, by Plato, Spinoza, and Hegel.

and more of the higher in the lower. These terms, however, he would probably not have used; he was accustomed, rather, to distinguish between the more partial and the more complete, the more abstract and the more concrete, appearances of the whole. It may be added that, in weighing Nettleship's words, the reader will do well to remember what has been said of his tendency, in dwelling on a particular aspect of truth, to ignore as self-evident more obvious complementary aspects.

Nettleship's insistance on the continuity of things may be seen in another characteristic of his philosophizing. He was deeply impressed by the truth that the answer to complicated questions lies in the understanding of simple ones, or that the only way to approach the interpretation of the highest facts of experience is to arrive at clearness about the most elementary. He writes, for instance: 'If I had to begin over again, I should like to try to master the *elements* of a few big things. Till I have done this, the rest is all confusion, and talking about it is beating the air. And whenever I at all understand the elements, I seldom find much difficulty in finding "applications" everywhere. Anything presents every kind of problem' (January 1890). Again: 'These old chaps [the Greek philosophers] certainly do bring one face to face with elemental things, and that is what I want. I sometimes feel that if I could only be quite clear about such things as one and many, same and other, rest and motion, all life would be simple' (July 1891). And with this characteristic, again, was connected another. 'One always comes back to the feeling that the truth in these ultimate problems is not got by thinking (in the ordinary sense), but by living'—so he wrote in 1880, and the words have nothing unusual about them, except perhaps the

implication that there may be a 'thinking' which is equivalent to 'living'; but in his last years Nettleship felt equally strongly the necessity of this 'living,' or of personal experience, for the real understanding not merely of ultimate problems but of the simplest facts. He writes in 1889: 'One cannot understand anything unless one can in some remote way experience it.' Again, in the same year: 'I am at work at Plato again. The endless difficulty of these big men is that one can only understand them at the rare times when one has fragmentary glimpses of their actual experience. At other times they are mere words.' And a year later: 'I have got on slowly, but, I think, fairly satisfactorily with Plato: but I am continually being pulled up by inability really to *feel* certain extremely elementary facts which, I am sure, meant any amount to him.' The misgiving which most troubled Nettleship regarding his capacity to write a valuable philosophical book was, I think, the doubt whether he had sufficient 'experience.'

The feeling expressed in these quotations explains in part some traits already touched on, and some others worth mention. It supplies one reason why Nettleship's interpretation of great philosophers was so exceptionally close and sympathetic, and why it sometimes advanced so slowly. It partly explains also his want of interest in much philosophical writing. He often felt that though, in a sense, he understood an author's meaning, he was unable to 'realize' it, and that, instead of repeating and grasping an unusual experience, he was going through a mere exercise in dialectics, though it did not follow that he laid the blame on the author. He seldom read the writings of a great man's disciples, because he thought they generally made him easier by pulling

him down to their own level. He was averse to philosophical controversy, largely from a feeling that often the disputants were separated ultimately by inability to reach one another's experience. He thought, for instance, that to a competent 'hedonist' the word 'pleasure' could not denote the experience of which his opponent wrote; and although Green's arguments against hedonism seemed to him sound, the problem that really interested him was to find the central flaw in the experience which Green called pleasure,—the flaw which is the real ground of the intellectual difficulties of hedonism[1]. Two other characteristics may be mentioned in conclusion. Nettleship's own language was studiously simple, and he had a strong dislike to needlessly technical terminology; partly, no doubt, on grounds of taste[2], but partly because he knew how easy it is for students of philosophy to suppose that they have appropriated an author's meaning when they are really doing hardly more than repeating his phrases. He also took comparatively little interest in the working-out of ideas into detail, in their application to a wide field of instances, or in the solution of subordinate problems. His own method was to state his main idea as simply and broadly as possible, to illustrate it by one or two very familiar examples, and to leave the rest to the hearer or reader. His taste in these respects was

[1] He attempted to indicate this in a few lines in his *Memoir* of Green, p. cxxxvii.

[2] I have had no opportunity of referring to the accuracy and delicacy of Nettleship's feeling for language. This was evident in his criticisms and translations, and (I am told) in his compositions in Latin, Greek, and Italian. It is obvious in his English prose, and also in the few pieces of verse that he wrote. Green suggested to him in early days that he might approach philosophy from the side of language; and various passages in his lectures and letters show an inclination to do so. See, for example, pp. 53–4, 86, 99, 127–141, of this volume.

repelled by the verbosity and repetitions of some philosophers. For example, though I do not suppose he underrated Kant's greatness, much of the *Critiques* seemed to him mere surplusage, an ocean of unnecessary words containing a few ideas, profound and far-reaching, but capable of simple statement.

Some of the characteristics lately mentioned seem to account both for the striking effectiveness of his teaching, and for the few defects, real or imaginary, which I have been able to conjecture from report. To begin with the latter, a few of his hearers thought his lectures commonplace, and the less able men found some of them difficult to understand. The simplicity both of his method of treatment and of his language seems to be the main source of dissatisfaction in both these cases. For those who wanted striking or piquant remarks upon Plato, instead of interpretation of Plato, Nettleship's lectures can of course have had little attraction; and his avoidance of technicalities, of reference to controversies, and of negative criticism, as well as his reduction of every problem to its barest expression, might easily deceive a clever man who, in his ignorance of the difficulties around him, was led so simply to a result. And, though it may seem strange, these same characteristics may have been a cause of perplexity to the less able of Nettleship's pupils; for reference to controversies, negative criticism, and even technical terms, though they may bewilder and mislead the beginner in philosophy, also arrest his attention, give a certain support to his mind, and sometimes open a passage from his ordinary experience to the world of thought, while a very simple positive statement on a difficult matter conveys very little to him, and therefore seems to him

either trivial or obscure. Nettleship himself felt that his simplicity sometimes made him hard to understand, and in one of the last of his letters alludes to the fact. He says: 'I find my mind perpetually running on certain elementary things, and at the same time I only get at anything by realizing it in very homely instances; and I fancy the combination is embarrassing to many people. The natural way to most men seems to be to move in a sort of middle region of half-imagery, half-abstractions, which always bothers me.' To this may be added that, whatever a lecturer's powers of speech may be, a treatment of difficult questions not preceded by any verbal preparation must sometimes be hard to follow, and even wanting in lucidity.

On the other side, only a few words need be added to the remarks already made under various heads: for, if the foregoing pages have conveyed to the reader any definite idea of what was most characteristic of Nettleship as a man and a student of philosophy, he will be as well able as I to imagine the effect of his teaching and influence. His pupils felt that they were in contact with a man remarkable for intellectual strength and subtlety, but still more remarkable for the seriousness and sincerity with which he endeavoured to find and to convey to them the truth. They felt that he was careless of novelty and brilliance, and uninfluenced by partiality and antipathy; that, sympathetic as he was to ideas from every source, and full of reverence for great men, he still valued ideas solely for their truth, and emphasized only truths which he had himself experienced; that, greatly as he cared to help them, he did not seek to win their adherence to any doctrine, or even to elevate and inspire them, but simply told them what he saw to

be true. At the same time, they felt that the search for truth, the philosophy which it was his business to teach, was no mere intellectual employment to him, but his life; and that the truths which he had learned and wished them to learn with him made life, in his eyes, significant and great. He founded no school, and perhaps few of his pupils could have set out in form the ideas he gave them; but he taught them to think and to believe in thinking, and some of them are conscious that most of what they value in their own minds derives from him. He could not preach to them; but they know from his silent witness that the only sure way of doing good to others is to try to be good oneself. How can they remember him without feeling, as he felt, that conceit is ridiculous, cowardice more painful than any pain, selfishness treason to oneself; that sloth and hardness and all forms of evil are literally a dying of the soul, and that no other death is worth a thought? They may have guessed that his interest in them sustained him in weariness, and that to him there was 'no reward so great as the feeling that one has won the gratitude and affection of the undergraduates.' They will like to know that when, just before he left home for the last time, circumstances led to his making his will and writing other directions in case of death, he remembered many of them. 'I should like,' he wrote, 'to send greetings to a huge number of men whom I have known at school and college, but I could not make a complete list, and I should not like to make an incomplete one.'

I have said that Nettleship could not preach to his pupils (and the word is not used in any offensive sense). Feeling so strongly that philosophy ought to be, and, at its best, can be, only the utterance of personal experience,

he was keenly conscious of the distance between his own life and the thoughts of great writers, so that he would sometimes exclaim that the more he understood what life really was, the less he lived it. Even as a young man he was half afraid to speak of his higher aims and aspirations, and when he did so would break off with such words as, 'it is no good dreaming until one has bridged over the gulfs in oneself.' It was therefore quite impossible for him to adopt the tone of a preacher, and he even shrank from lecturing on those subjects which touch most directly on life and conduct. After a single experiment in 1872, he never gave a general lecture on Moral Philosophy[1], and even in his lectures on Greek Ethics or the history of Moral Philosophy he was often ill at ease and felt himself 'a solemn humbug.' It is not likely that the effect of his teaching was diminished by this feeling, but it cost him many a struggle.

Chiefly for this reason, too, he would never give anything in the shape of a religious address. He did at one time begin to write for his pupils a paper which touched directly on the nature of religious ideas: it was studiously matter of fact in tone, but he put it aside. A good deal later, when he was invited to give an address of this kind, he declined. 'I am quite clear,' he wrote in reference to this proposal, 'that whatever religion there is in me had better come out in the only form which is natural to it, i.e. in my ordinary work. The *specifically* religious form of expression—preaching—seems to me

[1] Almost the whole of the course given in 1872 dealt really with metaphysical and psychological foundations, not with moral philosophy itself. The lectures were written in full, but no trace of them remained among his papers.

only to be right when it is one element in a specifically religious life.' His objection, it need hardly be said, had nothing to do with the fact that he was a layman; and no one was more anxious than he that the men should hear from Green as many lay-sermons as he was able to give. But those ideas and modes of worship which are considered 'specifically religious' occupied in Green's life a place which they did not occupy in Nettleship's, after he had definitely broken with traditional beliefs. Though he would have accepted most of what Green wrote and said of those ideas, they ceased to be the natural channels of his religious experience, and he seldom found in the customary forms of worship the 'best moments' on which he relied for inspiration. Yet the thoughts which ruled his life, though far too difficult and too free from the alloy of sense to form the creed of a Church, were fitted to be the medium of religious experience in a mind like his; and assuredly they were so. If 'religion' means the union of a man's whole being with that which he conceives as at once the source and the perfection of all that he knows, admires, and loves; and if a man may be called 'religious' when his deepest desire is to attain such union, and when his life is full of the effort after it—then those who knew Nettleship best will feel that they have scarcely known a more religious man.

In his last years he had given up some of his College work, and it is most likely that before very long he would have retired and have devoted himself in London to philosophical writing. Nor is it probable that, even if his colleagues had wished him to become Master, he could have been induced to accept a position which in some respects would have been very uncongenial

to him, and for which he considered himself in those respects unfitted. He was thought by the friends who saw most of him in these last years to look decidedly older, and at the same time to have grown more peaceful, if not happier. He had, I think, mastered the restlessness of unsatisfied love; and, while his sympathies were only deepened and enlarged, he seemed to have attained much of that indifference to the chances and changes of life of which religious writers speak. Alike in intellect and character, which in him seemed in a peculiar degree inseparable, he was standing, when his death came, higher than he had ever stood before. The last of his letters to me was written the night before he started for Switzerland, never to return; it was meant to be read only if he chanced to be the first to die; and almost its final words were these: 'Don't bother about death; it doesn't count.' Not for him, doubtless, or for that which includes both him and all who loved him or felt his influence; but to them, and, as they believe, to others, his death counts only too much. He lives indeed in them so long as they are true to him; but they must feel how dim is the reflection that their memories, or even these *Remains*, can render of a spirit so ardent, deep, and pure[1].

A. C. B.

[1] I have been asked to print the inscription on the memorial tablet in Balliol College Chapel. The words are as follows:—'In memory of Richard Lewis Nettleship, for twenty-three years a tutor in this College. He was born at Kettering, December XVII, MDCCCXLVI, and died on Mont Blanc, August XXV, MDCCCXCII. He loved great things, and thought little of himself: desiring neither fame nor influence, he won the devotion of men and was a power in their lives: and, seeking no disciples, he taught to many the greatness of the world and of man's mind.'

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

AND

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

IMMORTALITY

(PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS)

[This paper, and the two that follow it, entitled 'Pleasure' and 'Spirit,' were written two or three years before the author's death. They were composed, by way of experiment, for a friend who wished to discover how far the want of education in technical philosophy would be a hindrance to the understanding of some of the ideas which were occupying Nettleship's mind.]

1.

PEOPLE talk of 'personal' immortality, and often find fault with what philosophers say on the ground that it is merely 'impersonal.'

It is clear that the first thing to do is to come to some understanding as to what we are to mean by *personality*. It is probably the hardest of all subjects, and yet it is one upon which we are all ready to pronounce in the most easy-going way.

It is worth while to bring home to oneself how extraordinarily vague, confused, or inadequate, many of the things are which we *suppose* ourselves to mean by personality.

To begin with, we generally assume it to be a definite, self-contained, unchanging thing, round and about which all sorts of more or less separable and changing appendages confusedly float.

Or it is something 'inward,' the most inward of all things, that to which we think we should come if we stripped off all the coats of circumstances, custom, education.

But we soon realize, on thinking, that there is no circle to be drawn round any one, within which all is 'personal,' and without which all is 'impersonal.' We realize what may be called the *continuity* of things. What, for instance, is a triangle? A space bounded by three straight lines. Where does 'it' stop? At the lines, of course. But these lines *are* merely its contact with surrounding space, and the 'personality' of the triangle is one thing if the surrounding space be limited to the page of a book, another thing if it be extended to the room where the book is, another thing if it be carried on to include the solar system, and so on. And though for particular purposes it is necessary to define the triangle in particular ways, it is, strictly speaking, quite true that it is continuously one with the spatial universe.

What is a 'person'? A body occupying a certain place, keeping out and otherwise acting on other bodies. *What* and *how many* other bodies? It has weight, it exerts pressure, it causes the sensations of colour, sound, smell. Each of these again is continuous with other sensations, and ultimately with universes, of weight, colour, sound, scent, &c.

A man touches me with his hand, looks at me, speaks to me. All this is called 'personal' communication. He writes a letter to me. This too would be called by some

'personal.' He builds a house, makes a picture, founds an institution, passes a law: I live in his house, enjoy his picture, am maintained by his institution, am put in prison or protected by his law. Is this personal or not? If not, why not?

Well, it will be said, you may not *know* or *feel* that it is *his* house, *his* law, &c., whereas you *must* know or feel that it is *his* hand or voice.

But what does '*his*' mean? There lies the whole question. In calling the touch the touch of *his* hand, you mean that you know, or have reason to believe, that under certain circumstances the touch would be accompanied by some other sensations, and those by others, and so on: and this possible continuity you call 'him.' Apply the same principle to the other things. It is only want of power that prevents me from connecting the feelings which I have when I look at the picture or am protected by the law, as continuously and as indissolubly with the 'him' who made them.

Of course it will be said, 'This want of power is just what makes the difference.' No doubt it does, but it is good to realize that it *is* want of power that puts the limits to our sense of personality, and that, as a matter of fact, those limits are *very* varying in different people, and in the same people at different times.

Everybody is 'continuous' with a good deal more than (say) the space six feet round him and the time an hour on each side of him. The simplest memories, hopes, associations, imaginations, inferences, are extensions of personality far greater than we can easily realize. Every 'here' and every 'now' is the centre of practically innumerable 'theres' and 'thens,' and the centres are absolutely inseparable from their circumferences.

Loss, separation, death, is failure of continuity. A being which was (so to say) always closing up with everything would change but would not die.

2.

There is an irresistible tendency to associate, or even to identify, immortality with *duration*. Yet when we think of it, we see that duration, strictly speaking, plays very little part in what we really mean by immortality, so far as we mean anything by it.

Take any simple fact of duration, e.g. an hour of time. What *is* an 'hour'? 'The time taken by a hand on a clock to go round a certain space and get back to the point it started from'; 'the time taken by a shadow to move from a certain point to another certain point,' &c.

But these simple-sounding phrases are not so simple. The 'time taken by the clock-hand to move,' &c., is supposed to be a definite, absolute, thing. But it is only so by reference to, or comparison with, some other 'time taken,' e.g. a certain portion of the motion of the earth in regard to the sun. Try as hard as you like to attach a definite meaning to 'hour,' you will inevitably find yourself thinking of at least two things, which you will probably call at first 'the time' and 'what happens in it.' Thus an hour may mean that, if you could watch the clock-hand and the sun together, a certain position of the one would coincide over and over again with a certain position of the other: i.e. they would take the same time to do a certain thing (get from here to there). Or again, 'it takes an hour to read twenty pages of a book,' 'it takes an hour to feel at home with so and so'; these mean that, if we could watch a clock-hand and

certain parts of ourselves, we should find certain acts of the clock-hand (reaching a certain point) coinciding with certain acts of our intelligence or feelings: and ultimately (as the position of the clock-hand means something which we see, or infer from what we see) an hour means two or more acts of consciousness compared and identified (i.e. felt to be the same in a certain respect, viz. in respect of points of beginning and ending).

Accordingly 'an hour' is a very different thing accordingly as the experiences compared and identified are different. There is no such thing as 'absolutely long' or 'absolutely short.' As we all know, 'an hour' (in the sense of two observed positions of a clock-hand) may be long or short according to what we do or experience in the interval. If we are simply 'waiting' for something, 'it' will probably seem very 'long.' What is the 'it' in this case? Probably it is the observation of the clock-hand in a *great many* different positions, or of the pendulum making a *great many* beats. *These* are the things to which we attend, and, properly speaking, *these* are what we are doing or experiencing during the 'hour': the 'hour' *is* (say) 3,600 beats heard, *plus* the perception that the first beat and the last coincide with a certain position of the clock-hand. Now this is a very large experience of its kind; we go through a great deal of auditory perception and attention in it; and we express this by calling the hour very 'long,' because the perception in question happens to be the perception which has been chosen to *measure* 'length of time' (i.e. it is the experience with which we compare and, in a certain respect, identify other experiences).

Now suppose the hour is not passed in 'waiting,' but in a very interesting talk. At the end we constantly say,

'How short the time seems! I should not have thought it was an hour.' First, then, what does an 'interesting' talk mean? To be 'interested' is simply to be 'in it,' and this means that we are attending a great deal. But what does a 'great deal' mean? To attend to 3,600 beats of a pendulum is to attend a 'great deal'; so is to watch a clock-hand passing through sixty points; so is to take in a page of a hard book, or fifty pages of an exciting novel, or a scene in a good play; so is to perform a delicate surgical operation, to draw a delicate line, to sing an exciting or difficult song, to have a row with any one when you are really angry, and so on. These different operations may 'take very different times'; i.e. the beginnings and endings of them may coincide with very different positions of the earth with regard to the sun. If at the end of them we are inclined to say, 'How quickly the time has gone!' it means that we should not have expected (if we had thought about it) to find the clock-hand where it is. And this again means that we carry about with us a sort of *average feeling* of how long the hand takes to get through a certain space, and this average feeling represents *roughly* how much we should feel between certain positions of the hand, if we were 'doing nothing in particular' (i.e. partly watching the clock, partly doing a little of fifty other things). When, then, we feel that 'the time' has been short, we really mean that we have been going through so much in other ways that we have gone through very little measurement of time, as 'time' is usually understood (i.e. as the observation of certain changes of position in certain bodies). On the other hand, we are just as likely to say at the end of one of the experiences mentioned above, 'What an age it

seems! I seem to have lived through years.' This is very interesting, because it makes us see the complete relativity of time-measurement.

What happens in these cases (when the 'time' seems 'long') is that we measure the motion of the clock-hand in terms (so to say) of what we have been experiencing. We have 'gone through a great deal,' 'lived a great deal,' 'put out a great deal of energy'; and just as the hour measured on the clock seems 'a great deal' when we are 'waiting,' because we attend very much to the hands, so now we say it seems 'a great deal' because we have attended very much to the reading or looking or singing. Properly speaking, it is not the 'it' which seems a great deal (not the clock-measured hour), but it is the 'it' filled with all that we have experienced. We are surprised that so much could be 'got into an hour,' because we *mean* by an 'hour' (as we said before) a rough average of what we expect generally to experience when the clock-hand moves a certain distance.

All this may not seem to have much to do with immortality. But it helps one to see that 'duration,' 'going on,' &c., have not the simple or definite meaning that we are apt to suppose. The truth seems to be that nobody ever wishes simply to 'go on'; what men really want, when they want at all, is to be or do *more* of what they are or are doing; but what sort of '*more*' it is depends entirely on the particular circumstances. What is 'more' or 'longer' from one point of view, or on one principle of measurement, will be 'less' or 'shorter' on another. We shall always find that, when we use the terms 'long' and 'short' in an apparently absolute way, we are applying a rough average sense, which is got at by unconsciously taking bits out of

different experiences, and which does not really apply precisely to any.

We may say, All that we call 'duration' implies a comparison of two or more different experiences, any one of which *may* be chosen to measure the rest by. 'Absolute duration' could only apply to a being which was *all* in *all* its experiences (not less in one and more in another). But then 'duration' (in our sense) would not really apply to such a being; and this is just what is expressed by saying, 'With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day.'

PLEASURE

(PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS)

THE discussions of Greek philosophers about pleasure, the nature of it and the part which it plays for good and evil in human life, are full of interest and suggestion.

Philosophy is only the concentrated and articulate expression of the experience of certain men, an experience which all people have to some degree. And in the history of philosophy, accordingly, we may be said to get a sort of quintessence of what human nature has come to find in itself, so far as that admits of expression in language.

The first, and also the last, question that can be asked about anything is, 'What *is* it?' It is all-important to be clear what exactly this question can and ought to mean. The understanding of this is the foundation of all clear thinking, as the misunderstanding of it is the source of all confusion.

Observe, firstly, that the answer to the question, 'What is *x*?' is never simply '*x*.' Such an answer would universally be admitted to be *no* answer: the person giving it would, properly speaking, have said *nothing*. All answers that are really answers are of the form, '*x* is *y*, *z*, &c.'

Now this is a very important fact. It compels us to realize that the 'being' of anything, that which it 'is,' its 'x-hood,' is never adequately expressed by saying, 'It is just itself and nothing else.' Or, to put the same thing another way, *if* and *so far as* we insist that 'x is just x and nothing else,' we are merely insisting that it is *in*expressible.

The instinct which we all have at times to assert this has, indeed, if rightly understood, a truth in it, which it is important to consider. We stick to it, and rightly, that 'x is x'; that 'whatever may be said about it by way of explanation and interpretation, the fact to which we ultimately come back is the fact from which we start, the fact that x is not anything else in the world except itself.' This conviction has found expression in various forms; e.g. 'the essence of anything does not admit of analysis'; 'no reason can be given why a thing is what it is'; 'the individuality (which = indivisibility or unanalyzableness) of anything is an ultimate fact, behind which we cannot go.'

Consider *in what sense* these sayings are true; and for this purpose take some simple fact of consciousness, e.g. the consciousness of the taste of a peach, or that of the roundness of a circle. In what sense can we, and in what sense can we not, say '*what* these are,' or express their 'being'?

First take the assertion that we *cannot*. What does it mean? It means, e.g., that the taste of a peach is not the taste of any other thing; that it is unique; that this is what is meant by calling it 'of a *peach*'; that, if a person had never had personal experience of it, we could never convey its nature to him at all adequately by any amount of description or analysis; and that the

taste remains precisely the same fact of consciousness after our attempts to define it as it was before.

All this is very true and very important to realize, for not realizing it leads to all sorts of delusions, and gives rise to the common feeling that, when people do what they call 'explaining' a thing, they are usually merely 'explaining it away.'

But now look at the question from another side. When we rightly assert that the peach-taste is absolutely unique and individual, what exactly is it that we are asserting (for we do undoubtedly mean to assert something, not nothing)? In other words, what *is* uniqueness and individuality? Or, what *is* it to *be* unique and individual?

In answering this, let us, as far as possible, put words out of our mind, and attend to that which we are conscious of, that which we experience, in tasting the peach. Let us start by supposing that the experience comes without any premeditation (let us wake suddenly and find a peach in our mouth), and let us further suppose that we have never tasted or heard of a peach before. The first and least thing that we can say of the experience is that it is 'new'; i.e. it stands out, so to say, from and against a vague general background (our taste-experience). If it did not at least do this, there would, strictly speaking, be no '*it*' at all. This will be found to be equally true of every experience that we have; however many times we may have had it, it is still absolutely distinct each time that we have it.

It is true that what we call 'habit' tends to diminish its distinctness. But what does this really mean? 'Habit' is not some mysterious force (as we are too apt to suppose) which 'acts upon us'; it is merely the word

expressing one particular kind of limitation in our power of experiencing. There is no *necessary* connexion between the *repetition* and the *loss* of an experience. On the contrary, the curious thing is that it is by repetition that we *gain* (as well as *lose*) experience. Let us go back to the peach, and illustrate this. We saw that, whatever the taste is when experienced, however much or however little there is in it, it is a distinct something, and that this distinctness is (necessarily) a distinctness in, or of, or against, a something else. This distinctness is not something separate from the individuality of the experience; it *is* the individuality; the 'self-hood' of the experience *is* at the same time a 'not-something-else.' Now let us see how the experience may *grow*, or become an experience of *more*. Suppose us to wake a second and third time with a peach in our mouth. We shall be conscious of the taste, and we shall also be conscious that it is the *same* taste as we had before. Now in this simple statement there are three possibilities implied. We may feel inclined to say, either (1) This is the same taste, only to-day is Tuesday, and the day on which it occurred before was Monday; or (2) This is the same taste, but now I like it better or find more in it; or (3) This is merely the same taste over again, and it doesn't interest me so much as it did the first time. In case (1) we may say that the experience is (though not precisely, yet for practical purposes) 'the same'; in (2) it is 'more'; in (3) it is 'less.' Consider (2). We are apt to think that the 'more-ness' means that, while the experience *itself* remains the same, something *else* has been added to it. But this is only an imperfect way of putting the fact. The experience in (2) is just as individual, just as much 'itself and nothing else,' as the

original experience, and its individuality consists in an unanalyzable consciousness. That is, though we describe it by saying, 'it is the same as the original one but also more,' we cannot by any device separate the two factors in it without making it cease to be '*it*.' Suppose, e.g., the increase consists in what we call 'not only new but pleasant,' 'not only sweet but piquant,' 'not only peculiar but like some other taste,' 'not only nice to me but what would be nice for a certain invalid whom I am fond of'; the various elements thus combined by 'not only but also' make up in each case a *single* experience; the consciousness *of* the combination is not a combined consciousness; if we took it to pieces, i.e. if we attended exclusively first to one, then to another of its elements, we should be experiencing, not *it*, but quite different *its*.

More obvious illustrations of this truth are, e.g., such experiences as 'aesthetic impressions': the consciousness of a musical phrase, or of a combination of lines or colours, is one indivisible thing; it is not *made up of* the several notes, lines, or colours, but it is these *in* combination.

In this sense *all* experience is unanalyzable; it can never be divided without becoming a different experience, any more than an organism can be divided into its organs without ceasing to be an organism.

On the other hand, *no* experience is, strictly speaking, simple; i.e. an experience is never of *one* thing merely, but always of a unity of two or more things. And in this sense it always admits of analysis, or rather, it always *is* an analysis; i.e. it is always a consciousness of something as distinct from, a variety of, following on, connected with, but at the same time one with, something else. It does not matter whether its internal structure

can be put into *words* or not; what we have to consider is the nature of the experience itself, and this will always be found to involve some, however little, 'structure.'

Growth of experience, its becoming more, may thus be represented as growth of structure, or a process in which we come to be more 'constructive,' to put more together, to find more in things, to get more out of them. (All these are equivalent expressions, for our experience *is* 'we,' and it makes no difference whether we represent ourselves as making it or as finding it; sometimes one and sometimes the other way of speaking comes more naturally.)

Conversely, *loss* of experience, its becoming *less*, will mean that certain elements in our construction drop out and leave gaps. The less we 'get out of a thing,' or 'the less we put of ourselves into it,' the less we *are*, the less there is of us. If we could see right into the experiences of a number of persons who were all supposed to be experiencing the same thing (looking at the same picture, hearing the same tune, doing the same duty, receiving the same pleasure or pain), we should find that they all experienced different things, and that all had gaps, bigger or smaller, in different places. And it would be a mistake to single out the one place in them all (if there happened to be one) where there was no gap, where they all coincided, and call *that* the experience of *the thing*. The *thing* is really *all* that can be possibly experienced under the given circumstances, and no human being can say beforehand what or how much this is. Different people differ in nothing more than in the different amounts which they experience under externally the same circumstances. To one, as Wordsworth puts it,

'A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more';

to another,

'The meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'

The experiences of both are perfectly real and individual; they differ in the amount which they hold together or construct, or again in the amount of themselves that they put into the experience.

What is usually called 'taking interest' illustrates the same thing. To be 'interested' literally means to be 'in it' (curious that the slang 'in it' and 'out of it' should have retained something of this original meaning). We experience a thing just in proportion as we are 'in it,' or (to use another graphic phrase) make it our own. In proportion as we 'lose interest' we cease to experience, and, so far as that thing is concerned, we cease to *be*. ('Interest' at its highest power is 'love,' and if we could take interest in *all* things, we should be on the way to love all things, and this means to 'be in' all things or make all things our own, which is God. If any one wants to have a healthy sense of his limitations, let him ask himself, (1) how many things he is interested in; (2) how much he gets out of those in which he would say he was interested.)

As a result of all this, we may say, the self, I, personality, or whatever we like to call that which experiences things, is *one* in all that it experiences: *one* in seeing, hearing, smelling, and in every modification of these, *one* in every combination of these, and in all more complex experiences as well; it is this oneness which makes the unanalyzable self-hood of any and every

experience. On the other hand, the self in all its experience is one *of* or *in* many, an experience of distinctness in innumerable senses. In a word, it is always and everywhere a whole of parts, a combining and dividing activity, able to detach any part from any other part, and yet to be in them all.

Another important point to clear up in any investigation of pleasure is the proper meaning of the phrase 'pleasure *of* doing a thing.' It may mean two totally different things: (1) what would be described as, e.g., the *pleasure* of eating a peach apart from the *act* of eating it. What we really do when we make this distinction is to separate mentally one part of the whole experience from another part. The pleasant part of the eating, e.g., can be separated from the consciousness of moving the teeth (which may not be pleasant). But it is very important to remember that, so far as this is done, the experience ceases to be one, and the pleasure ought not (quite strictly) to be called the pleasure *of* that experience, but a pleasant experience in or along with a non-pleasant one. (2) Strictly speaking, the pleasure *of* doing or being anything is the pleasant consciousness of doing or being that thing; not a consciousness alongside the doing or being, but the conscious doing or being itself. It is only after what we call 'reflexion,' i.e. when we are more or less 'out of' the experience and 'in' some other, that we come to analyze it into act and pleasure. Yet what most people *mean* by 'pleasures' are the results of some such reflexion. They are, so to say, detached pieces of experience, retained and dwelt upon.

The common maxim, 'If you want pleasure, do not think about it,' is based upon this fact; for to 'think

about' pleasure to most people means to detach a certain element in some experience, and then perhaps to try to get it without the rest of the experience. The disappointment which so often follows arises from the fact that, having thus detached the pleasure, we expect to get it in some different experience, forgetting that there are very likely new elements present which disturb or prevent the pleasure.

SPIRIT

I.

THE history of the word 'spirit,' and of its equivalents in Greek and German, would be the history of a great bit of the human mind, and of that bit of it where perhaps its most absorbing experiences are to be found.

Πνεῦμα, 'wind,' 'breath,' 'moving air'—that is the thing to which it all goes back; and the text which sums it all up the best is, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: so is every one who is born of the wind.'

It seems as if the notion that lies at the root of all notions of spirit is that of *freedom* in some sense, whether in that of power to dispense with means usually necessary, or of power to produce something out of material usually unproductive. Hence the mystery, the unaccountableness, which always hangs about 'spirit' in all its senses, when it is looked at from a less 'spiritual' point of view.

Take some absurdly different instances.

A 'ghost,' when it means anything, means something which in some way transcends or does without certain conditions which the person who calls it a ghost cannot

do without. It comes through a door without having to open it, speaks without having to breathe, appears without having to occupy space, &c.

A 'spiritualist' is a person who can communicate with other persons in ways unknown or unfamiliar to most people, and these ways imply the power of dispensing with certain usual means or organs.

A person 'of spirit,' in English, is one who rises above certain circumstances which would depress other people. A person of *Geist*, in German, is a person who gets something out of things which to most people suggest nothing. And a person of *esprit*, in French, is one who does the same in the somewhat lighter things of life.

The 'spirit,' as opposed to the 'letter,' is the meaning got out of a formula or principle by one who sees it in many bearings, one who is very much alive, as opposed to that which is got out of it by one who can see it in only one or two bearings and is dead to the rest.

The 'spirit,' as opposed to the 'flesh,' is the activity of mind which is independent of actual touch or bodily presence, as opposed to that which is tied to these for its experiences.

'God is a spirit'; he is not 'in this mountain' or 'at Jerusalem'; wherever there is anything, there is he. He is absolutely free activity, able to 'make all things new,' and 'where the spirit of God is, there is liberty.'

One great difficulty in the way of understanding spirit is the inveterate habit of supposing that 'spiritual' activity is a single definite kind of activity, opposed to another definite kind called 'material' or 'physical' or 'natural.' The latter is supposed to be known and understood, the former is supposed to be 'mysterious,' 'supernatural,' and the like.

The truth seems to be that *all* activity or agency may truly be called spiritual, if by 'agency' is understood that which gives rise to something which was not there before.

All 'things' whatever, and all the 'properties' of things, are ultimately forms of agency, force, energy. Things *are* what they *do*, and what they do is *themselves*. Motion, heat, light, magnetism, electricity, &c., are different forms of agency, i.e. they are names for various sorts of change which occur under various conditions. They are better understood than many other forms of agency only in the sense that they admit of being more precisely described. They may be called 'physical,' if this merely means that they have certain properties in common, distinguishing them from, e.g., what are called 'personal' agencies ('moral influence,' &c.). But the 'physical' forms of agency can be no more 'explained' than the 'moral,' nor can the 'moral' be less 'explained' than the 'physical.' (*Explanation* in the scientific sense means the expression of something in terms of something else, with which we are more familiar or with which we can deal more easily.)

Wherever there is agency, there something is being produced different from what was there before, i. e. certain conditions are being transcended, gone beyond, in a way which could not be predicted (except by a being which was the source of *all* agency, the universal agent).

All agency is in this sense 'mysterious,' a continual 'miracle' or 'wonder.' But it is generally called 'mysterious' only when it is unfamiliar to the person in question. Gunpowder is miraculous to a savage, but he sees nothing miraculous in his bow and arrows. To

a being which was all stomach, the experiences of a being which had eyes or ears would be miraculous, just as again a person of exceptional knowledge or insight was regarded in the middle ages as having connexion with the devil.

2.

'Spiritual' and 'physical.'

Two of the most important and interesting illustrations of the various ways in which this distinction has been understood are found in the facts of *eating* and of *love*.

Hardly any subject has exercised and divided people more than the Eucharist. It is worth considering how and why there has been so much controversy about it.

Roughly speaking, there are two prevalent views: one, that eating the bread and drinking the wine are 'signs' or 'symbols' of certain 'spiritual' acts; the other, that the bread and wine *are* in some way 'spiritual' substances, the body and blood of Christ, in which the communicant in the act of eating and drinking participates.

Neither view seems to represent the deepest truth.

In the first place, we must ask what is a *sign* or *symbol*? To say that *A* is a symbol of *B* implies, of course, that *A* is something different from *B*, but (and this is often forgotten) it also implies that it is in some respect the same as *B*. The most remote, far-fetched symbol in the world must have *something* in common with that which it symbolizes; i.e. the person to whom it has the symbolic meaning must have *some* (however little it may be) of the same feeling or experience when he experiences the symbol, as he has when he experiences

that which it symbolizes. In other words, there are such things as symbols just because the most different things in the world have *something* in common.

From this elementary fact spring all the controversies and complications about symbols. One party says, 'It is *only* a symbol, it is *not* the real thing'; and they are partly right, for in order to be a symbol a thing must be partly different from something else, and this something else which is symbolized must be *more* than the symbol. The other party says, 'It *is* the real thing, this which you call a mere symbol'; and they too are partly right, for in order to be a symbol at all, a thing must be partly the same as that which it symbolizes.

Take the case of the Eucharist. What is the act (the 'physical' act, as it is usually called) of eating? It is an act in virtue of which a certain material comes into contact with a certain other material, and thereupon arises another material endowed with fresh properties. It would be much better to speak of 'agencies' throughout. Bread, for instance, is a certain agent, capable of acting and being acted on in various ways. The palate, tongue, throat, stomach, blood, &c., are other similar agents. Bread in the various processes of chewing, swallowing, digesting, &c., becomes a new agent, does new things, is an element in a new whole, contributes to new results; some of these results have got names; e. g. 'taste,' 'satisfaction of hunger,' 'refreshment,' 'strength,' 'health.' If we chose, we could follow the bread through a still wider circle of transformations; e. g. we could see it becoming an element in an 'artistic' or a 'moral' or a 'spiritual' result; i. e. we could see the agency or force which it has (or, rather, which it *is*) becoming an agency or force in the production of a picture, the doing of

a brave act, the overcoming a temptation or difficulty. The great mistake which we usually make is that we follow the bread as far, say, as the digestive process, and then stop and draw a line; on the one side of the line we put what we call the 'physical' agency of bread, on the other we put what we sometimes call the agency of a 'mysterious' moral or intellectual or spiritual agent (quite separate from bread). But the truth is (however absurd it may sound at first) that there is no *one* thing, 'bread,' beginning to be 'bread' at a certain point and ceasing to be 'bread' at a certain other point. The properties (i.e. forces or agencies) which make 'bread' as it is in the loaf, become quite different when 'bread' is in a stomach, and quite different again when it is blood and muscle and nerve, and quite different again when it is feeling and thought and emotion of various kinds. And there is *absolute continuity* in all these changes, though the agency at any given moment is quite different from what it is at any other given moment.

Now it is what we may call this *continuity* of agency which makes symbolism possible. Bread, in *all* its various phases of existence, is an agent which enters into and contributes to the total agency which we may call human life. If we like to call it 'a symbol of life-producing agency,' we ought to mean that it has (really, not only fancifully) something in common with *all* life-giving agency. It (so to say) points beyond what it is in any given phase, to the infinite other phases into which it is capable of entering and into which it eventually does enter, just as conversely the agencies of those other phases point back to (because they are really continuous with) the elementary agency of bread. It *is* they prospectively, they *are* it retrospectively.

It might be asked, why then should we not call moral or artistic agency 'symbolic of' digestive agency? I suppose to an omniscient mind everything would be equally symbolic of everything else; or, more accurately, such a mind would see everything in everything; whereas to us with our limited and unequally active minds one thing only 'suggests' or 'is like' or 'recalls' or 'contrasts with' another. And the principle upon which we go is, apparently, to call *A* a 'symbol of' *B* when, from the point of view at which we are at the moment, *B* means *more* of the same kind of thing that *A* means. Digestive agency is much, but the agency of growing is more, the agency of moving about is more still, the agency of making clothes, houses, machines, is more still, the agency of making schools, laws, government, art, science, religion, is more still, and so on. But in *all* there will be found certain identical features; in all there is what we may call 'assimilation' of one thing by another, the assimilation resulting in an agency different from either of the agents assimilated.

In this way it is literally true to say that human society is an 'organism'; only it should be remembered that its organic life or agency is incomparably more complicated than that of an animal or plant, and therefore incomparably more difficult to set out in detail.

To return to the Eucharist. We saw that in reality 'bread' is an element or factor in a continuous agency. But the name 'bread' (like all names) is intended to mark off a more or less definite bit of this continuous agency, and enable us to treat it as if it were a thing by itself. *What* particular bit is marked off by this or any other name, is impossible to say precisely, because different people mark off different bits according to their

different views and interests. Still there is a sort of average meaning for 'bread,' which it is the business of a dictionary-maker to ascertain and define. Starting from this (which he would call its 'proper' meaning) the dictionary-maker goes on to notice various other meanings which he calls 'derivative,' 'metaphorical,' and the like (all of which arise from the same fact as that which gives rise to symbols).

Taking 'bread,' then, in its average or dictionary sense, as that which is 'physically' assimilated and transformed in the Eucharist, it is obvious that it is *not* what is ordinarily understood as a spiritual agent, 'the body of Christ.' It is 'only' a symbol.

But now suppose a person to eat this bread, and in the act of eating it to realize (not of course completely, but very much more than is usually done) the immensity of the act; to realize as *one* thing (for it really *is* one thing) the chewing and digesting, the increase of muscular strength, the doing of acts or making of things, in fact the whole of *himself* into which the bread is now entering. Or suppose more than this; suppose that not only once now and then, under special circumstances which help the act of realization, in church on Sunday, &c., but *whenever* he eats or drinks, he has this comparatively full consciousness of what he is doing. To such a person it would be true to say that 'every meal is a sacrament.' To such a person 'grace before meat' would be no almost meaningless formula, but the true expression of a feeling that God, the omnipotent and omnipresent agent, was really present here and now, *in* this partial agent of bread or water.

Such a person might properly be said to have a comparatively 'spiritual' mind, or to realize more than most

people the 'spiritual' significance of the act of eating. But it is all-important to see that this 'spiritual' consciousness of the nature of the act is not got *at the expense of*, or *by leaving behind*, the consciousness of the 'physical' nature of the act. The person in question, for instance, would not help himself to be spiritual in eating if he were to practise being indifferent to what his food tasted like, or to how it was cooked, or to whether it was digestible. On the contrary, these properties or agencies of food are *part of* its spiritual property or agency. Food does not become an agent in the highest life of man *by giving up* its niceness and digestibility, but *by means of* these.

It is quite true that the niceness and digestibility of food *may,* under certain circumstances, have to be ignored in consideration of more important things. That is to say, the thing we call 'food' may (so to say) be called upon to do a different thing, to contribute a different factor, in the total agency of life. This illustrates from a new point of view what we said before about the *relativity* of things or agents. No agent stands alone or has its agency all to itself. It is *always* an element in a continuous larger agency. And to beings like ourselves, beings that are never the whole but that may always realize that there *is* a whole, this larger or largest agency must always present itself as an infinite possibility, a something of which we can never predict the demands it may make on us, a 'wind' that may change its direction at any moment, and of which all that we can hope to feel or know is that its direction is good, that we are better in proportion as we can surrender ourselves to it, that it is a *more* of something which we already are. Thus, for instance, 'food' cannot say, 'I am

food, with such and such powers and rights, which I will exercise and keep, but in my own way and at my own pleasure.' *In proportion as it says this, it is lost.* If it consistently said this and acted on it, it would not be food at all. It can only *be* food, even in the most elementary sense of the word, by entering into something else, assimilating and being assimilated. The more it 'loses itself' (what it begins by being) the more it 'finds itself.' This is no fancy, but a plain fact.

The whole truth about 'selfishness' hangs on this consideration. There is *no* act which *may* not be selfish, or which *may* not be unselfish. An agent or act is selfish in proportion as it tries to make itself the whole, instead of feeling that it is part of the whole. But it does not really save itself by trying to make itself the whole, nor does it really lose itself by realizing that it is only part of the whole. The pleasantness of wine is not made more by trying to concentrate *all* our powers upon the experience of *it* (meaning by this, we will say, a certain sensation in the palate); it would soon be made less, and the other powers would be made less too. On the other hand, it would not be less, but infinitely more, to a being which could feel it along with, or as an element in, *all* the delight to which it is capable of ministering. (By way of a simple illustration take, e.g., the enjoyment of wine by the solitary depressed drinker, its enjoyment in delightful company, its enjoyment by a person in whom it almost immediately became a poem, and its enjoyment by a so-called 'mystical' person in the Eucharist. Some people would say it was 'blasphemous' to put the last enjoyment along with the others; but it can only be so, if we allow ourselves to pull it down to a lower level. No doubt most of us are pretty sure

to do this, because we are so limited in our 'spiritual' capacity, and we are apt to help ourselves out of our limitations by giving what we call a 'tangible' interpretation to experiences which we cannot understand.)

Agency, then, is not 'spiritualized' by becoming less, but by becoming more. This gives us the right point of view from which to look at 'asceticism' and everything of that kind. There is, e.g., no virtue in 'giving up' wine, any more than there is any virtue in drinking wine without enjoying it. All true 'asceticism' means simply the acquisition of some greater power by practice. Everybody who has *any* ambition of any kind whatever 'asceticizes' a little, i.e. *gives up something to get something more*. But a person who says 'wine in itself is bad' is as wrong as one who says 'wine in itself is good.'

The prejudice (sometimes right and sometimes wrong) against 'asceticism,' 'spirituality,' and the like, seems to arise mostly from the fact that men *must* recognize a sort of average experience and express it in a sort of average language and habits The most really 'spiritual' people are, I suppose, the people who talk least about it. A person to whom every meal was a sacrament would be the last to say it to his neighbours at a dinner-party, for he would know that his words would not convey what he meant, and would convey something that he did not mean. A person who really felt that he was 'training for an immortal prize' would not go about saying so, for he would know that what is ordinarily understood by 'training' and 'prize' is only a fragment of what he understands.

On the other hand, it must be insisted that the 'average' meaning of words (and this is the average level of experience) has no right whatever to call itself the 'true'

meaning. 'Philistinism' in all its forms is the refusal to admit that things can mean more than I, the Philistine, choose that they shall mean. John the Baptist comes neither eating nor drinking, and the Philistines settle him by saying 'he has a devil.' Jesus comes eating and drinking, and the same Philistines settle *him* as a free liver, who keeps company with vulgar men and loose women. But 'wisdom is justified of *all* her children'; the world, if we would only open our eyes, wants them all, is the better for them all; and the publicans and harlots often go into the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisee.

As the Philistine tends to interpret 'spirituality' by pulling it down, calling it 'cant' or 'madness' or 'eccentricity' or 'radicalism' or 'vapouring' (and he can always produce lots of instances where so-called spirituality is not spirituality at all), so many well-meaning people interpret it by calling it 'miraculous,' which is really another way of pulling it down. Take the Eucharist again. The feeling (true and justifiable in itself) that every act *has* 'a spiritual meaning,' 'an eternal significance,' 'infinite consequences,' and the like, unable to maintain itself at its height, helps itself by saying, 'This bit of bread is being transformed into divine flesh'; and in saying this, it thinks, not of the real wonder (that bread is really an agency in the whole agency of human life, and so in the life of the world and God), but of a sort of nondescript process by which 'bread' (in the average sense) is somehow converted into 'flesh' (not indeed 'flesh' in the average sense, but still in some similar sense).

Then comes the angry 'man of science' and proves triumphantly that bread is bread and nothing else, while

the 'man of religion' goes racking his brains to find a way by which the 'physical' laws of bread may be superseded, and yet the bread may still be bread.

The cure for a wrong or spurious 'mysticism' is to realize 'the facts'; but 'the facts' must not be taken to mean (as they generally are) either certain particular facts (of chemistry, for instance, or physiology), or certain particular aspects of facts to which I happen to be accustomed. *The* fact is the *whole* fact, neither more nor less. True mysticism is the consciousness that everything which we experience, every 'fact,' is an element and only an element in 'the fact'; i.e. that, in being what it is, it is significant or symbolic of more.

INDIVIDUALITY

[Remarks on a pupil's essay which there was no opportunity of discussing orally. About 1889.]

A STONE 'does not distinguish itself from its environment.'

Doesn't it, just so far as 'stone' means anything? Any of what are called its 'properties' seem to be exertions of force, actions and reactions. E. g. it occupies a certain space (keeps other things out and is kept in by them), has a certain weight (presses on other things and is pressed on by them). Of course a plant does and suffers a great many more things than a stone, but both, so far as they are anything distinct from anything else, are so because they act on and are acted on by an environment.

The question is, What *is* environment? Where does it begin? What is it that is environed? It is the old problem of 'circumstance' (of which I suppose environment is only a modern translation).

If you say the environment of the stone is the adjacent spaces, then the *it* of the stone is occupation of a certain space. If you say its environment is the bodies upon which it presses, then *it* is pressure. So with the plant: where does 'it' begin or end? To what distance, for

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instance, is the surrounding air or soil affected by its absorbing surface? At what point do they become part of it, and when ought 'they' to be said to act upon 'it' and 'it' upon 'them'? One is inclined to say that the plant is what you could take away and put somewhere else without its being changed, and that you could do this without carrying the air and soil with it. But it couldn't be taken away without *some* air, or transplanted into *no* soil.

An 'individual' is properly 'something that cannot be divided.' This seems to give one some clue. The individuality of a thing is just the amount of things which make one—from which none can be taken away without the unity ceasing. A heap of stones, we say, has little individuality, because we can take away a good many stones and still call it a heap. But it isn't the same heap, and does not really retain *its* individuality. Any two things that can't do without each other seem to make an individual, and the more things there are in this condition the greater the individuality. A complete individual would therefore apparently have no 'environment'; or, environment begins where individuality ends. To any two contiguous stones in a heap the rest of the heap is environment; to any two notes in a tune the rest of the tune is environment; and when you add some more notes and make a phrase, what was before 'environment *and* individuality' has become all individuality.

Thus too it seems difficult to distinguish between 'taking in' and 'giving out.' The two notes of a tune *are* exactly what they take in *and* what they give out: they are affected by the notes on each side of them exactly as much as they affect them: if you alter them you alter the tune, and if you alter the tune you alter

them. No doubt they have an individuality out of the tune, and one is inclined to call this their *own* individuality. But it is no more their own than what they had in the tune; or rather, 'their' is now a different 'their' and has a different environment (the particular circumstances under which they happen to be heard). If it be said they can exist and have individuality without *any* environment, I suppose one would have to ask whether two notes could be one thing (have an individuality) except to a consciousness which was more than they. Anyhow, they could only be without environment if they were the universe (or fancied themselves such).

Thus, for everything except the absolute, individuality implies limitation (i.e. environment), and the great difference in the associations which the word has seems to come from the double fact that, while every individuality is measured by the amount which it holds together (i.e. by the amount of what would otherwise be environment that it converts into itself), it is also measured *against* what still remains environment, what it excludes, asserts itself against. 'Individualism' and all that goes with it, isolation, selfishness, jealousy, fear, represent this side of the thing. A 'great individuality,' such as you say Shakespeare was, represents the other side.

You say that the attempt to take in without giving out results in death. I suppose this is quite true, only it seems that one must say the same of the attempt to give out without taking in. The trouble is that each of these phrases ('taking in,' &c.) only expresses *one* mode of activity or being, and it is impossible not to be affected by the metaphor which is necessarily present in any such partial account of a thing. When a person makes a box, or a tune, or a law, does he take in or give out the most?

It seems impossible to make any distinction. You say indifferently, 'he puts himself into the wood,' or 'he takes the wood into himself.' At any given point in the process you can analyze it into 'wood' and 'him,' but it is only your analysis; the fact is indivisible, and that fact is just individuality. If he says indignantly, '*I* am not box,' that is only because he is aware that he is other things as well.

Ultimately one seems to have to say, the greatest individuality is that which produces most, or out of which the most is produced. It does not seem really to matter which you say, though it sounds as if it did. One might compare individuality to centre of gravity. Every material body has a centre of gravity, i.e. is an individual or indivisible system in respect of motion. On the other hand, each centre of gravity is determined by those about it, and ultimately by the centre of the earth (to go no further). If one thinks of other properties besides motion, it seems to be the same. E.g. any person has one centre of gravity at each moment regarded as a body merely, another regarded as an organic body, another regarded as a healthy body, another regarded as a legal 'person,' another regarded as a character, and so on. And as in the original sense the centre of gravity is continually changing, and the body is continually becoming a different individual and getting into different environments, so with the other senses. And one can imagine a stone refusing to admit that it had any other centre of gravity than that which it had in a particular place and position, and being very much distressed or offended when it found itself topsy-turvy, and putting the blame upon its environment which would not conform or which it could not assimilate, whereas all the time the

environment was conforming beautifully, and in fact there was no environment at all, for the world of bodies was individual.

A person who, as you put it, 'knows a great deal' without being a great individuality, does not, I suppose, *really* know a great deal. What one means is that a great many pieces of information make a *kind* of unity in him (in what is called his memory), but that the unity that they make is not as close or organic as we can conceive it might be. We see, for instance, that there are other bits of the 'he' which seem to stand quite apart from 'his knowledge.'

It seems very important to recognize, as you do towards the end, that the problem of individuality is raised in different ways to different people. As you say, it may be 'people' or it may be 'things' that 'refuse to come right.' What one is perpetually doing is to stereotype oneself—to fix one or two experiences as the centres and try to keep these and make everything else into circumference. There are two lines of Goethe which always stick in my head about this:

> Nur wo du bist sei alles, immer kindlich,
> So bist du alles, bist unüberwindlich.

I suppose both self-depreciation and self-assertion are equally wrong kinds of this 'centralization.' In both one allows oneself to be divided into a more or less hostile self and not-self; only in the one case one shrinks from the not-self, in the other one threatens it. The people who have, in various phraseology, represented love as the reality of things, have I suppose felt this, for love is the only thing that is perfectly fearless and yet perfectly kind.

The difficulty is to keep between the two extremes, as

Aristotle might say, that of being nothing because one has only *one* centre, and that of being nothing because one has *no* centre; death by stagnation and death by dissipation. The ideal would be to be the centre of *every* circumference. Practically the important thing seems to be that one should try to be the *growing* centre of a *growing* circumference, so that while one is always ready to change one's individuality without fear of losing it, one should always carry the individuality that one has so far made into each new environment, so that the old should become young and the young old and thus death be impossible.

THE ATONEMENT

[The following rough notes, evidently written merely for himself, seem, from comparison with the ideas contained in Nettleship's letters, to belong to 1886.]

THE 'Christian' doctrine says, God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to save it, i. e. to make it one with himself again.

This assumes that the 'world' is estranged from God; that this estrangement is the fact of 'sin'; that the effect of sin is death—perishableness; that by 'atonement' the world regains 'life.'

What is the relation of these conceptions to the patent facts of life?

We see that everything perishes: *πάντα ῥεῖ*.

Yet we equally see that nothing perishes; everything becomes something else: life is only possible through consumption (death): life *is* the process of transmutation.

On what ground do we distinguish life from death, *γένεσις* from *φθορά* (for it would seem that we might indifferently call either the other)?

We apparently call change 'life' when it is change to something which we consider higher, better, more developed, &c., &c., and vice versa with 'death' (a thing 'grows' when it becomes more that which we take it to be; it decays when it becomes less what we take it to be).

From this point of view, then, to 'live' is to 'die' *into something more perfect.* (In Aristotelian phraseology, all 'becoming' is transition of 'matter' into 'form': the form carries on the matter into itself, but transforms it in so doing.)

The question is, Is the process of the universe (the sum of its processes) an infinitely various see-saw, up and down, like a sea, the volume of which is never increased or diminished, but the forms and magnitudes of whose fluctuation vary infinitely; or is it a process to a constantly higher being; or (since this last seems logically impossible) is it really no *process* at all?

Certainly as far as human power of observation goes, it seems idle to talk of permanent 'progress.' We have absolutely no means of judging whether what we call the history of the world is a progress or not. Even if we could certainly trace continuous progress for a century, there is nothing to lead us to suppose that it might not cease at any moment and become regress, &c.

It seems to be really the same with what we call individual organisms; we talk of their 'growth' and 'decay,' but this is only true from a particular point of view. So with nations—we see that progress in one point is generally accompanied by regress in some other.

And yet there is the invincible conviction of a distinction between absolute death and absolute life: the conviction that 'becoming' may be a *real* becoming—a *real* transformation into something *more.*

The doctrine (or *a* doctrine) of the New Testament goes so far as to say that God himself gave (and is eternally giving) up what is dearest to him in order to save the life of the world. (Death is self-surrender;

all loss is a kind of death; the 'only-begotten Son' is the summing up of what is dearest, most *one's own.*) I. e. God can only be at one with his work, can only make it to be truly *his* work, by eternally *dying*—sacrificing what is dearest to him.

God does not thereby *cease to be*: he does not annihilate *himself*: he lives eternally in the very process of sacrificing his dearest work.

Hence God is said to *be* 'love'; for 'love' *is* the consciousness of survival in the act of self-surrender: the consciousness of dying for another and thereby of being one with that other.

How if this were the truth of the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest'?

That doctrine has at present been interpreted in two opposite ways—neither of them satisfying.

To some it means the ghastly fact that 'force' governs the world; that all the feelings which we naturally prize most are really of no avail against this sort of Juggernaut's car of 'evolution.'

To some, on the contrary, evolution is increasing adaptation to environment, and they look forward to a state of *complete* adaptation—a state in which there would be no sacrifice, no struggle.

Neither interpretation satisfies the double conviction, (1) that love is the strongest thing in the world—the most *living* thing; (2) that love *means* self-sacrifice, is strong only in weakness, lives only by dying.

The '*whole* creation groans and travails in pain': wherever we look, in the organic and inorganic worlds alike, we see change and decay and apparently infinite waste.

On the other hand, we can see (though very fragmen-

tarily) that the waste is not waste. Suppose for a moment that all human beings felt permanently and universally to each other as they now do occasionally to those whom they love best. It would follow that all the pain in the world would be swallowed up in the joy of doing good. Then go further, and suppose every particle of energy in the world animated by the equivalent spirit to 'love' in the particular form of energy which we call human consciousness.

So far as we can conceive such a state, it would be one in which there would be no 'individuals' at all, in the sense in which 'individuality' means mutual exclusion: there would be a universal being in and for another: where being took the form of 'consciousness,' it would be the consciousness of 'another' which was also 'oneself'—a *common* consciousness.

Such would be the 'atonement' of the world—God eternally living in his own death, eternally losing, and eternally returning to, himself.

FLORENCE AND ATHENS.

[From some 'Notes of Travel in Italy and Greece (1888),' read to a Tutors' Club in Oxford.]

FROM Como I went to Florence, getting time enough at Milan to lunch in the piazza opposite the cathedral. Why should it be so impressive as, in spite of many inward protests, I cannot help feeling it to be? It seems to have no noble lines in it; indeed in looking at it one almost forgets that it is a building at all, and regards it rather as a caprice in marble, planned to startle mankind. 'It is magnificent, but it is not architecture,' one is inclined to say. Whereas at Florence one feels, more to my mind than in any other city, that artists have been at work. You walk about and are satisfied. If you want proportion naked and unadorned, you stroll in the cathedral; if you want it clothed in splendour, you sit at a caffè and watch the campanile; if you are in a mood for exquisite detail, you can lean on the railings round the gates of the baptistery; if your imagination wishes to try itself on a problem which always leaves some height unscaled, some depth unfathomed, you can meditate on the monuments to the Medici. It is here, I think, that one feels most strongly what a terribly

aristocratic thing high art, especially sculpture, is; that the demands it makes on one's ordinary state of mind are as severe as those of the most seemingly paradoxical utterances of science or religion. I walk into the Medici Chapel, my body and soul encased in their nineteenth-century coat and trousers. I see four naked marble figures, in attitudes which I probably could not put myself into at all, and certainly could not remain in for five minutes. One lady is fast asleep, one gentleman wide awake; so much is comfortingly obvious. The other lady seems to have nearly finished undressing; the other gentleman has passed a restless night: both look dubious and uncomfortable. Such are the brute impressions which many, if they were honest, would have to confess to. And yet the most prosaic person in the world would admit that in those four little words, Day, Night, Dawn, and Twilight, a good deal of the poetry of life is wrapped up; and if Shakespeare himself had written four sonnets on them he would not have said all that is to be said. These are Michael Angelo's sonnets on them. Every curve, every line, was to him all-important—the only possible one. We are sure that it is so: but we have learnt the language of words so much better than that of marble, and there is no grammar or dictionary to the lines of the human form; and even if there were, think how far we should be from understanding Shakespeare if our only resource, when he seemed at all obscure, were to look out his words in Johnson. And so one can only hope occasionally to get glimpses of the great sculptor's mind, and to most of the world in most of their moods he remains unmeaning and grotesque.

One thing struck me more than ever in looking at

these statues, and that is how entirely mistaken it is to describe Michael Angelo, as has sometimes been the fashion, as a man who chiefly delighted to show his knowledge of anatomy. It is only on reflexion, as it seems to me, that one realizes the complexity of his attitudes. The first and prevailing impression is one of sheer beauty, which swallows up everything else; and it is just his extraordinary power that he can make his figures do what would be difficult or impossible as if it were perfectly easy and natural. It is as if the vehemence and complexity and restlessness of the modern world had for once found an expression as simple and masterly as that which is supposed to be the exclusive property of the Greeks.

If the antithesis between classical and modern disappears before the beauty of the Medici monuments, so does that between mediaeval and modern in looking at the bronze gates of the baptistery. We talk of the awakening of the love of natural life in the nineteenth century, culminating in that spiritualization of nature by such men as Wordsworth and Shelley, beside which Greek mythology looks crude and infantine. But what can be bolder and yet more beautiful than the juxtaposition here of the natural and the spiritual? In the main spaces of the gates is concentrated the Bible history, the great crises in the history of man; and the margin in which it is all set is made of plants and animals, corn and vines and olives and pulse, birds and squirrels and lizards and frogs. 'Yes,' we shall be told, 'that is all decorative.' Doubtless it is decorative, and Ghiberti may, for aught I know, have had no views about the meaning of baptism or any other religious rite. But the question in art is not what other things a man is

thinking about when he makes his poem or his picture; all the matter is, What does he actually say in his poem, what does he actually represent in his picture? Once said, once represented, it is the property of the world: every one may make out of it what he can. To one 'a primrose by a river's brim a yellow primrose is to him, and it is nothing more'; to another it can give 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' Here on this gate you can get both. If you are wanting a bronze frog just like a frog, here is a man who has one to show you. If you are thinking that the way into the kingdom of heaven lies through nature, and therefore through frogs among other things, here is a man who can show you that also. And the frog remains a frog whichever view you take of him; that is the beauty of it.

. . . . . .

I confess to not caring much about anything in Athens but the Acropolis; and that I should like to see regularly once a year. One is almost ashamed to talk about it, everything that one can say has been said so often. And yet this is just what is so delightful, to find all the conventionalities and platitudes of artistic criticism suddenly become perfectly real and poignant facts. I find that the Athenians *could* build and carve like no one else, that the Propylaea *is* the grandest portal through which a procession ever passed, and that the Parthenon *is* the temple where, if one were a god, one would best like to be worshipped. For I confess that all my prejudices in favour of Gothic vanish in front of the Parthenon. It may be that one's eye changes; but, whatever the reason, I find that its simplicity is as inexhaustible, its brightness as stimulating, its regularity as inspiring, as the com-

plexity, the dimness, the labyrinthine lawlessness, of our great cathedrals. I felt too this year, as I did four years ago, that the most extraordinary thing about it and the Propylaea is the impression of size and strength which they make. One is prepared for proportion and grace, but I certainly was not prepared for buildings which make you wonder how the stones were ever put together, and how, having been put together, they ever came asunder. And it is in this point that most distant views of the Acropolis seem to me so deceptive. There are some great buildings which one has to get away from to appreciate them; but it is not till you are on the steps of the Propylaea that you have any notion what you are coming to.

I was unlucky enough at Athens to come in for several days of unusual north wind, which did not seem to diminish the heat, while it took away all pleasure in walking about the dusty streets. But I had one good day on Mount Pentelicus. It is as pleasant a small expedition as you can have. You start along a level road with the mountain always in front, and refresh yourself with a three-halfpenny cup of black coffee in the village where Aristides and Socrates are supposed to have been born. You meet donkeys with panniers full of grapes, and a man who asks you for a light for his pipe gives you a bunch that it takes a quarter of an hour to eat. As the ground rises, it is broken with the dry beds of torrents, and covered with heather, dwarf holly, thyme, and bright green firs, which scent the air with resin. As you get nearer the marble-quarries, the paths are deep in dust as white and soft as fine flour. The quarrymen show both the curiosity and the courtesy which seem to be common in Greek peasants.

Knowing that they have no access to the *Oxford University Calendar,* you announce yourself as a professor, a καθηγητής, who is come to see Greece. This, with a distribution of tobacco, evidently pleases them, and they put their lunch at your disposal, cheese and broad beans and delicious water. A little more walking over shrub-covered rocks brings you to the top, and you look down on a little bay, deep blue against the yellow sunburnt plain. That is Marathon.

I sat down and tried to rise to the occasion, while two ravens came circling round quite close to inspect me, and, finding me alive, flew away. I do not know whether others have the same kind of experience about historic localities which have ceased to be anything except localities. To me there is—at first, at any rate—something baffling and bewildering about them. It is as if nature was trying to help one, but could not. The sea says it is the same sea which bore Darius's ships; the shore says it is the same shore on which Miltiades conquered; that is the way along which men carried the news to Athens; and very likely there were ravens on Pentelicus that day, and more than one interested spectator. And yet the sea and the mountain know nothing about it now, and one falls back with a sense of something like relief on the human reproductions, on Herodotus, on Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles*, on Byron. It is indeed only a special form of the feeling with which any sudden meeting of past and present affects one. As you walk about Athens, the new town, with its intense whiteness and its veneer of French civilization, the old town with its semi-oriental dirt and squalor, the desert where once was a Pnyx and an Areopagus, and the Acropolis standing aloof and defiant, these jostle and crowd one another

in the mind in a confusion that refuses to be adjusted, and leave one blankly wondering whether the Parthenon or the steam-tramway is the nobler work of man, or whether perhaps his nobility is not after all equally independent of both.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

[Most of these extracts are taken from letters written during the last ten years of Nettleship's life. The reader will see at once that they are not printed as examples of the author's correspondence, which was naturally concerned for the most part with more familiar subjects. Indeed it was at first intended to publish nothing which could be thought to have a merely biographical interest; but, in view of the fact that these *Remains* are preceded by a biographical sketch, it seemed best to relax this rule in one or two cases (Extracts 3 and 11). Some philosophical remarks have also been taken from early letters, though they would perhaps not have satisfied Nettleship at a later time.

In the *Extracts*, as in the *Miscellaneous Papers*, some trifling verbal changes have been made; but certain peculiarities in phraseology, the use of italics, capitals, and the like, have been left untouched.

The letters from which extracts have been made were addressed to T. H. Green (No. 1), Mrs. Green (Nos. 7 and 10), Professor Zumbini (No. 12), R. R. Whitehead (Nos. 14, 19, 26, 28, 30, 31), the friend for whom the papers on Immortality, Pleasure, and Spirit were composed (No. 32), and myself (the remaining numbers).

The extracts are as nearly as possible in chronological order.]

I.

PERHAPS it is lecturing on the *Ethics* which has made me realize more than I ever did before the appalling force of habit, and what courage it wants to make but one little step in a new path. And it has come home to me very much lately that all failure seems to have its root in the surrender of that initiative which is the essence of the rational self (my thoughts about life tend now to fall into Aristotelian formulae rather). When one has come to feel strongly how impossible it is *συνεχῶς ἐνεργεῖν*, it is so easy to go to the opposite extreme and give up the prerogative of activity altogether, except in the chance moments when it is called out by circumstances, and when it is really not activity of the self at all. Out of these thoughts seems to spring a whole philosophy of life—it is all old enough, I know—which says that true life is simply the being what we are bound to be, and that to be is to act, because we are in time; as on the other hand death and everlasting destruction is the remaining in the 'cold obstruction' of non-entity. So that the man who is not what he ought to be, fulfils his own condemnation and literally crucifies the Son of God afresh. Such a sort of self-annihilation, self-inflicted, and as little concerning the absolute spirit as the ignoring physical laws concerns nature, comes to me at times with much greater terror in it than any amount of hell-fire. What I find so hard is to translate such thoughts into a serviceable, working, everyday, belief. To express them, or even to hint at them, in ordinary life would be like talking gibberish; and yet, if they cannot find expression, they are so apt to degenerate into mere holiday fancies, which serve well enough to

make an essay or even to lend inspiration to other men, but which are not 'bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh.' And this is one of the things that seem to make modern life so hard—that whilst the voice of all the ages dins into one's ears that we are nearer to God than our fathers, that the world is fuller of divinity than ever, that the truth and goodness and beauty which is our heritage can afford to smile at the heritages of past times, yet this sense of fullness and divineness has to live in an atmosphere from which God seems to have been gradually eliminated, has to find its expression in forms which falsify it. It is as if one said to a man who had been living in the hole of Calcutta, 'Now we have got a vacuum, and you may breathe freely.'

However, I for one have no right to complain till I have done something to better the things complained of; and I suppose the only hope lies in patience and courage, patience to recognize fairly what has been lost (by me, I mean, not by mankind), and courage not to be afraid that all is lost. Where I feel most in darkness is when I try to think of my own personality: it is not so hard to realize the negative side—what I am *not*—, but when the question comes, What is that other self, in absorption in which what is ordinarily called 'oneself' finds its truest life? then I get stuck. The truth is, I suppose, that the troubling oneself about such a question at all is only one proof that I am not fit to know the answer: and so one must be satisfied with the unsolved opposition between what one has to call two selves, and with the certain knowledge that the times when one feels that one is most truly oneself are just those in which the consciousness of one's own individuality is most absolutely swallowed up, whether in

sympathy with nature, or in the bringing to birth of truth, or in enthusiasm for other men. (*July*, 1874.)

2.

I am not sure whether I understand what you mean about thought and the whole self. The whole question of the 'parts' of the self (intellect, imagination, &c.) seems to me horribly difficult. In a certain sense of the words I suppose no one would deny that it is a very common experience to 'see' a thing 'intellectually' and yet not to be able to 'realize' or 'feel' it; but what on earth one means, or ought to mean, by 'realizing' or 'feeling,' I don't know.

The form in which the difficulty most comes home to me just now is this: How can words be true, and yet not be true, at the same time? Or again, what is that of which words are a sometimes more, a sometimes less, adequate expression? As far as I see, it is a matter of temperament and education merely, what form of words conveys the truth in the best way to one: that is, words are emphatically made for man, not man for words. And I suppose that to some men abstract formulae give as full satisfaction, are as real to them, as poetry, music, or again active self-sacrifice, to other men. It seems as if, in any case, the realizing a thing meant the losing of one's individual self for the time being. At least it is true, isn't it, that the times when one is most fully satisfied, most sure, most up-lifted, are just the times when one is least conscious of any distinction between that in which one is so satisfied and oneself; whereas at the times when one says: 'I see that, but I can't feel or realize it,' one is, I think, conspicuously conscious of some such distinction; that is, the thing which one sees

is, so to say, in friction with the remainder of oneself, which remainder is not absorbed in the act of seeing.

But then this feeling of friction, of 'outsideness,' does not seem to me to take place only in cases of understanding, but in cases of imagining and acting as well. I mean, it seems possible to see the beauty of a poem or a picture, and yet not to be wholly taken up into the beauty of it; and it is certainly very possible to do a thing which, considered apart from the self of the doer, is good, but yet not to be oneself emptied into the act. And it is common to all these cases that one cannot say that one has made the thing,—whether truth, or beauty, or goodness,—one's *own*; or, which is the same thing, that one has not identified one's self with the truth, beauty, or goodness. So that it seems as if to 'realize' (in this sense) ought to mean literally to '*be* the thing,' and that words, whether of poetry or logic, are one of the material media through which this unification of subject and object takes place. And so, supposing a man whose organization requires that this unification or self-obliteration should take place through the medium of action, that man will never feel satisfied as long as he looks for it merely in words; while a logical man, or an imaginative man, will be equally unsatisfied by mere action, and so on. Of course the mass of men are not so conspicuously one thing or the other that they do not require satisfaction of a mixed kind; but one seems to see the difference in the case of very representative men.

However I don't know whether all this is more than restating a very old fact in a different form. It certainly does not touch the question how we can be (or be obliged to speak of ourselves as) composite selves, consistently with our being 'selves' at all. (*November*, 1874.)

3.

Via dell' Oriuolo, 26. 2^do^ piano.
FLORENCE, Sunday, *April* 25, 1875.

I have just come in and found your letter. I had been thinking of writing to-day, only I was afraid you might be doing it too and we should cross: but now I will do it before I get cold and put it off. If it's any consolation to you to know, the winter and spring here have been exceptionally bad: in fact I have given up believing in Italian weather. Last week we had some lovely days, but to-day is as cold and dreary as it can be. When it is jolly, of course it is very jolly, though in quite a different way from an English spring. There are no green fields and brooks and dewiness; every inch of land is cultivated with vines and olives, but all the spaces between them are sown with corn, and the green of this is something wonderful. Then the cypresses and holm-oaks make the dark, and the olives the grey, and of course the brightness of the air when the sun shines is unutterable.

And this is such a lovely place, the only place where you feel anything like Plato's *ὥσπερ αὔρα ἀπὸ χρηστῶν τόπων φέρουσα ὑγίειαν.* Wherever you go you have buildings which you have nothing to do but to look at and, behold, they are very good. Criticism simply subsides, and even observation in the ordinary sense: I know when I come away I shan't be able to describe a single thing accurately. And yet—it sounds almost blasphemy to say it—the whole effect is to make me, if not sad, at least dissatisfied. It isn't only the ordinary thought that the Florentines now are not what they once were; but the feeling will come up, What is the use of it to

English people? What meaning has it to them? The more I feel the beauty of the things, especially the pictures, the more I feel how far off they are; and it makes me almost angry to think how many cultivated English people there are who make a regular study of these things and really know a lot about them, and talk as if they were lords of Italian art in the same sort of way as the Germans talk of possessing Shakespeare.

Of course all this comes of not being an artist myself, but merely having a certain amount of receptive imagination. But the thoughts have been working in my head till I feel as if I must write something about it: and yet I don't know how. Do you know whether any one has ever written anything about the English religious imagination? I mean about Spenser and Bunyan and Milton. Of course they have been written about, but I mean in a philosophical way at all? When I was at Naples, Zumbini had got hold of an Italian translation of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and was enormously struck with the resemblance to Dante in many ways. But of course the contrasts are much greater than the resemblances. What I should like to know is, whether Christianity has ever taken hold of people's imagination in England at all in the same way as it did in Italy and, through the religious music, in Germany to some degree. And if not, whether there has been any substitute for it in England. And if not, again, whether the English mind can do without anything of the kind, or whether there are traceable causes which have prevented its natural development on this side.

The sort of thing I mean is this: one sees that in Italy from Dante to Raphael many of the greatest minds of the country dwelt a great deal on the ideas of the

incarnation and passion. These ideas to them, as being Italians, inevitably took a picturesque or plastic form; they did not think them, they *saw* them. And I suppose every holy family, or adoration, or what not, represents a different side of the idea, the side upon which it took most hold on the individual artist. To us, moderns and English, these pictures are one of two things: if we are artists, they are infinite mines for study and inspiration; if we are not, they are more or less symbols; i. e. they don't appeal straight to us, but we can more or less find a meaning in them—a meaning which we, if we had to express it, should probably express in words without ever imagining (completely at least) a picture. But to the ordinary English mind, as far as I see, such ideas as those of the incarnation and the passion have not only never taken shape in pictures or statues, but they have scarcely reached the imaginative stage of poetry, except in the case of a few hymns. I say nothing about the comparative moral effects of Christianity in Italy and in England: that is another question. The thing that I want to get at is, what particular elements or sides of the Christian idea have taken most possession of the English mind, and *in what form*? That it has not been taken possession of imaginatively by them seems to be pretty obvious: the most imaginative English poetry which is at all spiritual has been more pantheistic than anything else, hasn't it? (I use pantheistic vaguely: and I don't include Milton of course.) It is equally obvious that English Christianity has not developed a philosophy, nor fused itself with philosophy, as it has done in Germany. Has it really any characteristic forms? Or has the higher religious thinking in England gone on outside of English dogmatic Christianity?

Perhaps these are questions which are only interesting to me at the present moment, when I see Britons and Britonesses wandering about with their guide-books in the galleries in various phases of Ruskinism, Paterism, Ritualism or Spurgeonism.

And along of this comes another question. People are raging about comparative mythology and comparative religion: why doesn't some one take the Christian myth, say the myth of the incarnation, and trace its development in the European imagination? You start with the fact: the great man, who proclaims among other things the divinity of humanity. Then you have the idea taking form as a myth in its crudest shape—this man was born of a virgin. This myth, not having been much attended to at first, becomes later the material for an enormous superstructure of dogma and an equally enormous superstructure of art. The more the art develops, the more does the fact—the myth proper—get fined away, and the mere idea—the idea of pure humanity and divinity born of it—is represented by the simple putting together of a virgin woman and a child, with such various expressions, attitudes, actions, &c., as express the various conceivable relations of the divine to the human nature.

While the idea takes this development imaginatively, and reaches its most perfect because most human and natural imaginative expression, it has also a development speculatively, and becomes ultimately the doctrine of immanence in various systems of philosophy.

I don't know whether something of this sort would do anything towards setting people's minds free from the bondage to the supposed facts of Christianity and the idea of their necessity to religious belief. I feel sure that most English people who are at all religiously dis-

posed—women of course especially—look at religious pictures as so many evidences of historic facts: their imagination is not filled by the picture, for the subjects of the pictures are not such as their imaginations have ever occupied themselves with. Perhaps it would be better if they did not look at the pictures at all: but this is not possible with the present institutions of travelling and picture galleries.

I wish I could express better what I have been thinking about: but I am not in a good writing mood. In fact I can't say my head has been very brilliant ever since I have been out here, though lots of ideas have passed through it. But I hope when I get back to England I shall feel the good of the change more than I do now. As yet I have hardly ever got rid of a certain oppression, except at intervals when it is driven away by over-excitement of brain; and I don't quite know how to manage, for it is just with the over-excitement that the best thoughts come.

. . . . . .

My essay goes on: I can't help doing it elaborately, so it's no use trying not. I have a sort of idolatrous belief in doing a thing well if I do it at all: perhaps it only means pride which is afraid of criticism. . . . I wish I didn't feel the desire to write on so many things. It is one blessing of this essay that it gives me good regular work, not over-exciting, though even here sometimes I get too much strained. But perhaps not having any one much to talk to makes it worse. I feel pretty sure that when the essay is done I shall feel inclined to write something about Plato, which may be made compatible with Oxford perhaps.

Tuesday.

I put off sending this letter on Sunday, so I think I may as well go over the one stamp and enclose a note for Green. Yesterday the weather got splendid again, and I went out for five hours in the afternoon and got right away among the hills, where little country roads wind in and out, letting you see down steep valleys with tiny tumbling brooks, and here and there a sudden sight of Florence like a glorified Oxford from a glorified Stow-Wood, and every now and then a patch of poplars breaks the greyness of the olives into golden spray, and you hear now and then a nightingale in the blazing sunlight which would burn you up if there weren't a great wind which makes you almost drunk with its buoyancy, and the clearness of the hill-lines against the sky makes you jump every time you look up, and gradually the sun goes down and the wind with it, and the hills get purple, and the whole great valley of the Arno brims with a level flood of light.

To-day has been the same, only less wind. The Florence races are on—wretched things in themselves—but the place where they are held is lovely: Epsom with a background of Giotto's campanile: it's curious.

. . . . . .

4.

What you say about philosophy goes home to me a good deal. I had been thinking a good deal about *feeling* (in the strict sense of Gefühl), and I keep coming back to it. What seems to me to be true (I don't mean that it hasn't seemed true to lots of other people) is that feeling is worthless or precious in proportion as it is not, or is, translated into something which by an extension

might be called action. The ordinary form of trouble about it (to me at least) is that *either* I feel, and nothing comes of it, *or* I do, and there is no self, no life, in what is done. If you take desire and fear as the two typical emotions accompanied by feeling, I find incessantly that what makes them damnable and hateful is that they make action (meaning by that, articulate expression of self in any way whatever) impossible, or vice versa that as soon as action is possible they are, in the strict sense, impossible. But it is true, isn't it, that action is good just according to the amount of feeling which, speaking chemically, is set free in it. The most perfect illustration seems to me to be art. In any art, the more artistic [the work] is, the more form is there, i. e. the more measurable, definable, calculable, is it—the more rational or intellectual. Yet on the other hand, everybody since the world began has associated with art strength of feeling and unconsciousness of effort. A great piece of music can be taken to bits like a clock; a great poem, compared with any other piece of language, is intensely artificial; yet the amount of feeling which they represent is stupendous when compared with the song of a bird or a simple story. And this relation of feeling and intellect seems to hold good both of the artist and of his public. Nobody doubts that artists are more emotional than ordinary men; nobody ought to doubt that they apply more intellect than ordinary men. And as to the audience, I think what you say is frightfully true, that if you go to art to get your own feeling reproduced, you find it useless and flat, just because mere feeling can't find expression, and your feeling must be at any rate potentially endowed with form before you can be emotionally receptive of real form.

Doesn't the same apply to action in the ordinary sense? A strong man is always a man who feels strongly *and* who can get his feeling out: and it may seem fanciful, but, as far as I see, if you are asked to *describe* action you have to do it in some such way as you would do in the case of art: I mean, any act, like any work of art, is measurable in time and space, and the more of an act it is the more measurable is it, the more form there is in it. Hegel talks, doesn't he, about the great Greek statesmen doing their things like monumental works of art.

I don't know whether this has any bearing on what you say, but it seems to me to have. When you come to knowledge, you can distinguish the form of the object (i.e. its 'intelligible relations') from what one calls the meaning of it. What is this *meaning*? If you abstract it from the intelligible relations, or in so far as you do so, it seems to me to represent what I call *feeling*. It is this which makes the ordinary mind revolt against science as 'cold' or 'dry.' In a botany book you get the skeleton of the thing; in a man who wallowed in rose-leaves you would get something approaching to the other extreme (feeling); most people's enjoyment of flowers is made up of some of both elements. There is the sense of space, colour, smell, all taking this definite shape, shade, gradation, which are delightful in proportion to their definiteness: I don't mean in proportion to the degree in which you can describe them in *words* (which I believe is what most people mean by definiteness), but in proportion as they are *this* and not *that* shape, colour and smell.

Well, I suppose feeling represents the personal, individual, side of us. In itself it is the least communicable, and therefore the most trivial, of all things in us. Yet it

is that without which there is no communication and nothing important.

To say that reason is the only real, if this means reason in the sense in which it is opposed to feeling, means to me nothing. But isn't the mischief in the habit of opposing them? They are never absolutely without one another; all life *is* them both. And have not the great philosophers (Plato and Aristotle and Spinoza, certainly, I can't remember about Hegel), in trying to describe the highest forms of the human mind, always used phraseology taken from the emotional side of it, and put into it what is usually supposed to be absolutely unemotional? In fact, isn't it much the same with the philosophers as with the artists, only (and of course on other grounds this means a great deal) that the artist is a man in whom the formative force does not appear as *thought*, i. e. as logical thought, whereas this is the essence of the philosopher? And wouldn't it be better to talk of 'life' or something else instead of 'thought,' unless one can dissociate thought from the abstract categories? I mean, that what develops the world (*this* world, *our* world), whether you call it 'thought' or not, is always, as a fact, human consciousness which is (1) *my* consciousness, and therefore feeling, and (2) my consciousness for you and others, God perhaps included, and therefore intelligible. (*August*, 1877.)

5.

I am trying rather feebly to get into something like a fit state to lecture on the *Ethics* next Term, feeling as usual as if I had never been in Balliol Common-room in my life. I am reading Plotinus a bit by way of a change,

not because it has anything to do with the *Ethics*, but because it is Greek and philosophy and new. Of course it is full of Plato and Aristotle, but also full of more modern ways of looking at things; there is a good deal too which reminds one extraordinarily of Paul. The questions which seem to have interested him most are those about the nature of the soul and God. His notion of the absolute seems to be always that of something in which the distinction between subject and object is done away, but which is therefore undefinable and (in the strict sense) unknowable by us, though we can and must have a sort of sense or vision of it.

I find him very hard sometimes, and have not attempted really to understand the more logical parts (about the categories, &c.); but he is certainly worth working at, I think, and I should fancy had a good deal of semi-Hegelianism in him. I suppose he may be taken to be the religious outcome of Greek philosophy; he is never tired of going on about God, or, as he generally calls it, 'The One,' and he exhausts all possible images to explain how this One can co-exist with and be in the many, and how, though strictly no word can be said of it, it is yet the inevitable presupposition of everything that exists or is thought of. He is also at great pains to insist that all expressions (as e.g. in Plato) implying a separation between the worlds of sense and intelligence are to be taken logically, not locally, and that the ideal, so far from being removed from us, is all about us if we would only see it.

He seems to be conscious that the relation of the individual soul to the absolute is the centre of all difficulties. Besides various images, he usually explains it by saying that God does not divide himself into the

many individuals, but that they partake of him according to their several capacities, each one being potentially the whole of him in somewhat the same way as any one bit of knowledge involves potentially the whole of knowledge. From this it follows that the way to get to God is to let oneself go as much as possible into the unity which one potentially is, while on the other hand all evil and failure is a form of self-assertion, attempt to be oneself, to feel oneself, and the like.

The reason why we can partake of God, or why God communicates himself to us, is that it is the nature of all being to communicate itself (here he almost reminds one of Shelley's 'And the mountains touch high heaven'), and the higher the being the more irresistible is the impulse to do it.

But it's not interesting writing out things like fragments of an article for an encyclopedia. I should like to have translated some pieces if they weren't too long; here is a rum bit about nature which sounds almost like Goethe (he is talking about *θεωρία*, saying that, if you examine, you find that in all cases it is the real end of achievement, and that even nature really works for the same end):—

'If one were to ask nature for what purpose she produces, and if she chose to understand the question and speak, she would say: "You ought not to have asked, you ought to have understood and held your peace, as my wont is to hold my peace and say nothing. What then is it that you ought to have understood? That all that is produced is a sight for me to look upon in silence, a vision produced by nature; and that I, who am myself the child of such a vision, am by nature a lover of sights, and that which sees in me produces the object which it

looks on, as the geometrician draws that upon which his mind is active: I do not draw, but I look, and, as I look, the forms of the bodily world fall, as it were, from my gaze and take substance. [With me too it is as with my mother[1] and my begetters[2]: my begetters are the product of a mental vision; *I* owe my life, not to any action, but simply to the being, of thoughts greater than I, contemplating themselves.]" What then does this mean? It meansthat what we call nature, being a soul, born of a soul prior to her and living a more potent life, stands quietly at gaze within herself, looking neither at what is above her nor at what is below, but steadfast in her own place and self-consciousness, and that with this intelligence and consciousness of herself she sees her own effects as far as it is given her to see, and is content to do nothing more than perfect the vision, bright and fair. But the intelligence and sense which, if we like, we may attribute to her, are not like those of other sensible and intelligent beings; compared with them they are as sleeping compared with waking; for as she gazes on the vision of herself, she rests, and her gaze is unruffled but dim.' [*Enn.* iii. 8 (3).]

I should like to have gone on about what you wrote about, but I ought to be getting to bed, as I start tomorrow morning. I believe the old business about the Mean in the *Ethics* becomes more significant if one works it in connexion with this notion of feeling taking form under the action of something which is not feeling. One can see that in a work of art proportion is the condition of beauty, i e. of the ἀρετή of the work of art: destroy the proportion, make a leg too long and a thigh too short, and you make the leg so far cease to be a leg

[1] [The 'world-soul.'] [2] [The 'formal reasons.' Cf. *Enn.* ii. 3 (17).]

and the thigh a thigh. So in morals; only it is harder to see what gives the law of proportion here. In the work of art it is the whole which determines the true relation of the parts; in an act I suppose it is the conception of the end which gives unity to the act. Then there comes the further question, how far can any act be taken by itself? or, what is the whole (ultimately) to which the constituent elements of any act are relative? It seems at first as if in a work of art the standard were completely contained in the work itself; but I am not at all sure that this is so really. I'm afraid this raises that awful question of the (absolute) whole being somehow or other present in every partial whole. (*September*, 1877.)

6.

It *is* rather grisly when one thinks of fifteen years hence. In other professions, the longer one goes on the deeper one gets into the thing, at least if one ever gets into it at all; but in our line one seems likely to work out of instead of into it. Yet I don't fancy that I should better matters much by looking deliberately forward, for there is nothing to guide me that I can see, and the whole thing tends to become castle-building. I do believe that the 'eternal now' is the thing to live for really, and then the future settles itself; but somehow or other it seems possible to live for the day without really living in it,—I mean, to secure the disadvantages both of the star-gazer and of the earth-grubber.

The point in which all these qualms seem to concentrate themselves is death, which I have found myself thinking about more than usual lately. It is a strange thing, isn't it, that a thing which is one of the few quite certain and obvious facts, like death, should be a sort of

centre for all the problems and uncertainties in the world. And I always have a dim feeling that, if one could once get a clear grip of a single fact of every-day life, death would clear itself at once, and vice versa, just as it seems that to understand one's own nature would be to understand God, and vice versa.

Certainly one always comes back to the feeling that the truth in these ultimate problems is not got by thinking in the ordinary sense, but by living, which is, I suppose, what Carlyle and others mean by saying, 'Doubt of any kind is not solved except by action.' But at first there seems to be the same contradiction here as in 'living for the moment'; you lose the fact as soon as you begin to 'think about' it, and yet the less you think about it the less you are in it, and the less it is a fact. I suppose the fault lies in isolating one's activities, which is just what one never does do when one really lives. But I'm afraid we have said all this a good many times before.

Yes, I have been reading Bacon, the *Nov. Org.* and parts of the *De Augmentis*. I do find a good deal in him, I think, though it seems very hard to know how to lecture on him. He is strangely medieval in many ways, but there is a sort of breath of the Elizabethan time all through him. Surely it would be much truer to call him the father of the practical English spirit than the father of empiricism. His empiricism is full of metaphysics in the crudest and worst sense of the word; but in the idea that truth and power must ultimately coincide, and that philosophy has got to make man at home in the universe, he seems to have got the truest and most valuable part of the British aspiration. It is queer to find Plato and him so nearly coinciding in their notion of

the function of philosophy; and queer too that the way in which they both put the thing (that philosophy is to rule life, or to make it happy, directly) is just the most hopelessly impossible part of their theory. It is a pity that Bacon is equally typical of the inferior English characteristics, a sort of swagger and ignorant independence. (*January*, 1880.)

7.

Everything to me seems to come back perpetually to the idea of eternity in some form or other, and the form in which I want to get hold of it is not that of an infinite future but an ever-present 'now,' in which past and future should vanish or be absorbed. At rare moments the feeling seems to come, when distance in time and space literally vanishes or goes for nothing; but it is so hard to work it into ordinary life. And another difficulty is that, in trying to realize the nothingness of ordinary limits and losses, one seems so easily to fall into a sort of blank or void in which all that we really care about evaporates. The truth must be (and I am sure this is what he [Green] used to teach) that we get to the higher life, not by thinking away the lower, but by carrying it with us; in fact, that the higher *is* the lower, only transfigured or lived at a higher pressure. So that if it were possible to realize fully what one is, or what one is doing, at the most commonplace point of one's life, one would realize eternity—in fact, I suppose, one would be God. (*July*, 1882.)

8.

Does it ever occur to you that the 'horrors of mortality,' rottenness, &c., are no different in kind from

the horrors (if they *are* horrors) of all physical life? I mean, that if one chose to fix one's attention on certain parts of one's bodily processes one would be almost as much revolted as by the actual decay of death. And conversely, if it is the case that evil (in the form of what we call ugliness, bad smell, &c.) is only evil to imperfect organisms, then the process of death might seem to a central mind simply a continuation of that of life.

Anyhow, does not the horror of death come from the almost irresistible feeling that one's soul or self is somehow present to the decaying body, whereas really the decaying body is a phenomenon with a life of its own, no more or less horrible than a yellow leaf? Or again, is not one's dread of death the dread either of annihilation or of loss of identity, both of which are impossible, for, whatever one is, one must *be* something, and one's identity is the identity of what one is conscious of, not a sort of hybrid of that and something else? A bit of earth has its identity, and if I, i.e. a part of my body, become that bit of earth, I am not conscious of a painful transition, for I am at every moment exactly what I am, not a hanger-on to what went before.

Or once more, why should it not be possible to some mind to see all bodily existence as we are now sometimes able to see little bits of it? Is not a body which seems to us beautiful or good as much transfigured, spiritual, compared with the same body if we look into its skin, as ever a 'resurrection of the body' expected it to be? Or rather, is not 'bodily existence' a wrong phrase, if it means unspiritual?

But I can't get at what I want to say. Only I have a kind of feeling that the supposed ultimate antithesis between individual existence and existence in the absolute

is not a real antithesis—that *all* existence is and must be individual, whether in the form of what we know as feeling, or in the forms (to us inconceivable) which make earth earth, and an atom an atom, the difference lying not in the fact of being, but in the *amount* of being involved in each moment of existence. As Emily Brontë said, 'There is no room for death.'

I will stop. I daresay sometime the idea will come back in some perfectly clear and commonplace form. (*January*, 1883.)

9.

Why *is* it that so many seemingly petty things stand between one's soul and the truth while a man is alive? For it does seem that in death one sees things more *truly* as well as more intensely. It always makes me think of Carlyle's notion of history and biography—I mean, that the reality is the heroic and nothing else. And I suppose all the old ideas about 'dying to the body,' and 'philosophy being the practice of death,' come to much the same thing. The difficulty is that one does not realize the truth until it is too late to realize it effectively. Instead of making the physical life spiritual, one only spiritualizes it after it has ceased to be physical. It is like ceasing to eat and drink in order to be holy, instead of eating and drinking to the glory of God. (*March*, 1883.)

10.

It is strange how differently trouble affects different people. I sometimes think it only makes them better if they are good already. Nothing at least has given me such a feeling of my own moral weakness as the way in which personal loss has demoralized me. Every now

and then, and with regard to a few persons, I have better feelings than I ever had before; but on the whole it seems only to have drawn away the life-blood from daily life, and left me dull and unsympathetic to the ordinary world. And this makes me feel sometimes that, even if I had what I want, I should not be able to use it rightly; otherwise should I not be able to use the loss of it to more purpose? I suppose the personal feelings in which most of the best things in one's life are bound up ought to be perpetually expanding from their centre and returning to it again, until at last not only is one person worth the whole world to you, but the whole world also becomes transfused with your personal feeling. Because this is not so, or so far as it is not so, personal loss leaves the world empty and colourless. And most forms of consolation which talk about the love of God or of mankind are so very liable to sound vapid and watery. Or, even if they stir one up with momentary enthusiasm, it is so hard to throw oneself trustingly into the great sea without being paralyzed by that terrible longing which drags one back to the brook-side which had been all one's very own. But I am quite sure of one thing —however far I may be at present from living up to it— that the only strength for me is to be found in the sense of a personal presence everywhere, it scarcely matters whether it be called human or divine; a presence which only makes itself felt at first in this and that particular form and feature, not because it is not itself personal and individual, but because our capacity of personal and individual feeling is so limited and weak. Into this presence we come, not by leaving behind what are usually called earthly things, or by loving them less, but by living more intensely in them, and loving more what

is really lovable in them; for it is literally true that this world *is* everything to us, if only we choose to make it so, if only we 'live in the present' *because* it is eternity.

I say this because I think you will understand me. I very seldom say these things, and it is better they should remain unsaid for the most part, for they only become phrases. But now and then I think one ought to express the things which at the time seem the best and the truest, even though one is conscious (as I am) that the next minute one will be behaving like a brute to the people who are nearest to one and who ought to be the easiest to treat well. (*July*, 1883.)

II.

CORFU, *Aug.* 17, 1884.

I wish you were here to talk to. I have been out for a morning walk along olive-covered cliffs in an unmitigated sun, with lizards running about and grasshoppers talking incessantly (they always seem to me the very voice of the heat), and the sea and mountains one great blaze of blue: and now we have had the twelve o'clock déjeuner, and I feel in a delicious state of refined intoxication, in which the grosser particles seem to be purged away, and one desires nothing but sweet companionship.

I have been kept here a long time, first by five days' quarantine, endured on board a tiny yacht in company with three Greeks and a Greek Jew, two of them middle-aged gross merchants, and two young commercial travellers. I was naturally an object of intense wonder and amusement to them. I always find the commercial class the hardest of all to chum with. Their world-view

is so absolutely self-sufficing and unsympathetic, and, though they are not really a bit more sensual than oneself, their sensuality always makes me rather resent it. However I must say one doesn't often hope to find young commercials in England capable (as these Greeks were) of singing part-songs in a way which, though a little extravagant, moved one's inside (though I had scarcely any idea of what the words were about); and I was quite touched when one of them tried afterwards in German to interpret one of the songs (a love-song) with many apologies, because, as he kept repeating, it was 'hoch, sehr hoch,' and singing it made him literally pant with excitement.

We were let out of quarantine on Friday, and I had hoped to go across to the mainland at once and get to Janina, the capital of Albania, by to-day. But the English consul here said it wasn't safe to go without a guide, and the best guide is an old Albanian who goes across every Tuesday on business, so I am waiting for him. It is rather nice getting good food and beds after quarantine, but otherwise I wish I hadn't to stay here. A town, when one has nothing to do and knows nobody, is always a nuisance. However, the country is lovely to look at, and the people interesting to watch. What strikes me most is their tremendous sociableness. At night the whole population swarms out into the piazza and talks. I suppose love of solitude and reverie are almost confined to Teutonic people. I can't make out whether one is higher or lower for having it. Sometimes it seems as if it *could* only be a second-best thing to have communion with nature: and I do believe that, *if* the same sort of feelings which are now set going in me sometimes by simple natural life could be continuously

set going by every human being I came across, I should be a much higher animal than I am. Nature does not stir desire, and the interest in nature seems perfectly disinterested. But if one could get right through the desire and the fear which clog one's intercourse with one's fellow-creatures it would be a diviner air still that one would emerge into. I suppose the truth is that what one calls nature is enormously 'generalized' to us. I mean that one violet is practically the same as another violet, one bird as another bird. This has its advantages and its disadvantages, as compared with the infinite differences of men. It enables one on the one hand to see all violets in this one—to idealize: on the other hand, it makes one's idealization vague and wanting in flesh and blood, for one does not really *know* this violet. The sad part of the business is that the incarnation of the divine in men and women more often serves to obscure than to reveal the divine itself—except at rare moments. Or, to put it the other way, that in oneself which responds to the divine seems only capable of responding to it when it is presented in either a very simple or a very exalted form—in flowers and animals and waters and mountains, or in heroic men and their works.

It seems to be part of the same difficulty when one longs (as I did this morning) to live—not a mere animal life—but a life combining a simple satisfaction of one's simple animality with the highest spiritual energy of which one is capable. Is it simply the longing for happiness—for the sheer sense of freedom from pain and discomfort—which makes one think like this? which makes one almost hate the intermediate filling-up of 'domestic, social, and political' activity, which to most people seems the whole of life? Would one gradually

cease to dream at all, and become an uncomfortable animal? Is there no way to the kingdom of heaven but that of the best English citizen, of which Green expressed the highest theory?

I can't make out. I only know that when I get away from that life I feel as if I should some day never come back to it; and yet there is the dreadful thought that nearly all of whatever good I may have done in the world has been done in connexion—connexion often unwilling, but still connexion—with it; and that in my heart of hearts I believe that whatever in me does not somehow or other, however remotely or indirectly, serve humanity, might just as well not exist at all, and in fact *does not* exist at all. Perhaps by the time one comes to die, one may see how one might have been a divine animal without ceasing to be a man.

12.

Athens is all that I had ever dreamt of—I mean of course the ancient part of the town. It is strange, and almost revolting, to find tramways and steam-engines within a stone's-throw of temples and theatres of the age of Pericles. The contrast is more glaring even than in Rome, because the town is so much smaller. And yet what escape is there from such a state of things? The nineteenth century *must* live—*must* make money and seek improvement; and, if it has not the sense of beauty which can construct things beautiful as well as useful, we cannot expect it to sacrifice its comforts to what it would consider only an idea. We seem here to stand before the insoluble problem which troubled the soul of Leopardi . . . I think I enjoy the nights even more than the day. The moon is magnifi-

cent now, and it is not difficult to escape from the cafés and find quiet under the shadow of the Acropolis or the temple of Olympian Zeus. But the sight of these things raises many questions. Suppose that they had *all* perished; suppose that the Turks had destroyed all, as they have already destroyed so much. What idea should we have ever had of Greek art and beauty? And may it not be that there have been many races who have created things not less wonderful, and yet whose memory has perished for us for ever? It seems that we are driven to feel that human memory and human history are after all only a fragment in some greater mind and some vaster series of events; and that we can only find peace and confidence in the thought of something which is eternal and cannot change. (*September*, 1884.)

13.

I sometimes feel inclined now to doubt whether what one commonly calls 'feeling' a thing is *any* guarantee of being really in it or having a real hold on it. Or rather, must not one extend 'feeling' from those states which seem (only 'seem,' I suppose) to connect directly with physical affections, to include all consciousness in which one is at one with an object? Has the feeling 'up the back' when one hears certain music, the feeling of 'hot and cold' when one sees certain faces, the feeling of 'ready to burst' when one defies certain injustices, any more claim to be called feeling, and valued as 'real,' than the 'unfelt' energy with which one does a piece of daily work? There clearly *is* a difference, and one fancies that saint-like and heroic people live a more 'feeling' life—have more thrill about them—than ordinary mortals. Perhaps the state in which one does much of what seems

to others one's best work or acts is neither one thing nor the other; it has not the physical exaltation or the spiritual intensity. But there does seem to be such a thing as the spiritual intensity, quite different from any localized feeling, and capable, I believe, of transfiguring any such feeling into something from which the physical element has entirely evaporated. Great artists must experience something of this sort. In fact it often seems as if life would be easy if one could make a poem or a song or a picture out of one's sensations; and I suppose, if one could make a deed out of them, it would do as well. (*December*, 1884.)

14.

. . . If I ever said 'work' is the cure for weakness and misery, I was not thinking of what is ordinarily called 'individual effort' to the exclusion of an 'object,' which (as you say) is clearly a necessity. But it has been coming home to me a good deal of late that *any* work—*any* putting out of energy—does *ipso facto* take one out of oneself and bring one into contact with something not oneself. Isn't there a French saying of some statesman, 'On ne peut pas s'appuyer que sur ce qui résiste'? *That* is what I feel. As long as one is oneself merely, alone, it is like being in a vacuum. There is a feeling (which gets horrible at times) that one is groping out for something to touch, something to lean on, and that one can find nothing. This is the condition not of what is ordinarily called loneliness, but of the state of simple jelly-fish *feeling*; it is the state of pain when it does not kill or rouse to action, the state of ennui, of 'nohow-in-particular,' the state in which one is conscious of oneself, and yet conscious of it as almost a nonentity. Then

what happens? You see something, or smell something, or touch something; something comes against you; you have to do something; and, however simple or mechanical it may be, you feel yourself *against* something else and yet *in* that something else. The same holds good in higher things. It is the delight of doing and making, the delight of tending a plant or an animal or a human being, of making a box or a picture or a steam-engine, of solving a problem, understanding a poem, of worship and of love. The opposite state, the state of self-conscious nonentity, when it gets beyond the mere embryonic stage, takes two forms, fear or desire. In both one is conscious of oneself *against* a not-self, but not of oneself as *in* it. In fear the not-self dominates, in desire the self. Love, in any true sense, from the simplest up to the most subtle forms of it, is just this going out of the self into something which is only not the self because it is *more* than it.

What one ordinarily calls the 'self,' as far as I see, is a particular sensibility or a group of them—*what* particular one depends on the circumstances. When one speaks of 'self' in the bad or uncomfortable sense, one means some set of sensibilities which are feeling after something to feel, while the surrounding medium really requires certain other sensibilities to be in action. One wants one's dinner, or to talk to a certain person, when the particular point of the world of space and time in which one happens to be requires one to want something quite different. Then one is miserable, or talks of the bad self which thwarts the good one, &c. What we have got to do is to get out of our limitations; and this means to *be in contact* with the world wherever we happen to be, or (which is the same thing) to be at the

centre of things; and, if we could be and do this entirely, we should be God. 'God is love' because he is at one with everything, and yet he *is* none of the things he is at one with. Or, better, the divine life *is* the being this apparently self-contradictory thing. It is only apparently self-contradictory. I find even in the little things of life that the condition of enjoyment, of possession, of sympathy, is that I should in a sense be above or outside the thing enjoyed, possessed, sympathized with. Self-annihilation is damnation. You *must* be yourself, but to *be* means the consciousness of self in not-self. The bigger the self, the more things it stands outside, and yet the more things it enters into. This is equally true of what are called intellectual things, and of what are called emotional or moral things. Pantheism is wrong if it means that God *is* all things; but it is right if it means that there is *nothing* in which you cannot touch God; i.e. nothing which you cannot love, nothing which you need fear, nothing out of which you cannot make something, nothing in which you cannot be something.

Only in this sense is it true that 'doubt is solved by action'—by work. It is a lie, I think, to say that doubt, for instance, about God or beauty is solved by digging or being 'busy' or 'doing good.' What *is* true is that doubt means the (intellectual) state of non-contact, the state in which I catch at something but keep falling back on myself (i.e. on some out-of-place sensibility). *Action* is not moving the limbs, but *living* and *being*. To 'do something' is the way out of doubt or misery, because in doing we *are*; we assert, not some abstract proposition, but a bit of *ourselves*. We *are* the thing which we understand; we are *not* the thing which we don't understand, and that is what makes real doubt

miserable. There are two lines of Goethe which say it all :—

> Nur wo du bist sei alles, immer kindlich,
> So bist du alles, bist unüberwindlich.

I need not tell you that I feel all this so much the more because it is so hard for me to realize it; because I am so frightfully liable *not* to be 'all there,' to be anywhere but there, to fear and to want instead of to love. (*August*, 1885.)

15.

I do really believe more and more that the only rule of life for me is 'to be ποιητικός, not παθητικός.' I don't mean always to be 'busy'—far from it—but to be always 'creative' (God forgive the phrase). And I do begin to understand what Plato and others mean, when they say there is a state which is not one of pleasure or of thought, but higher than either—a state in which there is the greatest amount of vitality, but the least amount *both* of 'feeling' *and* of 'reflexion.' After all it is only applying to all life the principle of the artist, which always seems to me so tremendously instructive. Of *mere* pleasure you can *make* nothing—as little as of *mere* pain. And *both*, pleasure and pain, when they reach a certain degree of intensity (it would be truer to say, when they become as nearly as possible *nothing but* pleasure and pain), admit of no expression, and *are* next door to nothing—we are not alive in them. It would come to the same thing if you made the rule of life, 'feel *as much as* ever you can,' if it were properly understood. The amount of feeling *is* its correlations, radiations, suggestions, 'form,' whatever you like to call it. It is not true that you have *first* a 'real' feeling, and *then*

express it away or act it away; the expression or action *is* the feeling at a higher power. And if a man could honestly say that the consciousness of eating was to him the concentration of the universe, you must tell him logically to *be* a stomach.

And as to the business about the 'self' (I suppose it is Spinozism) it seems to me that what most people mean by their 'self' is simply a particular consciousness localized in a particular part; e.g. if they mean what they call their 'bad' self, it is a sexual feeling, &c. In fact, what we call 'our ideas' *are* ourselves. I don't mean that we are a string of onions, but that we *are* exactly what we are conscious of, what we live. There is no other life or living thing. It is another question what is the ultimate self. That (as far as I can see) can be nothing but the being or force which *is* the life of the world, of which motion and magnetism and life and imagination and morality are all forms. The sense that you are, as far as you are anything, the child of the larger life, is religion. Wherever you can lean on it, take hold of it, be in it, you are safe—free from desire and fear, which are the two forms of the sense of isolation, disconnectedness. (*August*, 1885.)[1]

16.

I have been dipping into a book about *Gordon in Central Africa* (1874–1879). It is just his diary and letters. There are things in it which make one shiver with admiration and delight. It is absolutely simple—'We are the clay and thou art the potter'—nothing but

[1 A year later Nettleship writes: 'I get to feel that what we call the "individual life" is a merely arbitrary space round which we draw lines of our own: the only real individual seems to be the "absolute."']

this in various forms. But it does make one realize what I always theoretically believe, that only here is peace and strength to be had. The wonderful thing is the combination—not sense of repose only nor devouring energy only—but the two naturally and inseparably combined. It is a form of love—the highest form, I suppose—the sense of absolute union with something not oneself, along with the continual desire to serve it, to do something for it. It is queer how what one mostly calls love seems to combine the two contradictory extremes, the mere blind intensity of feeling in which self swallows up the world, and the absolute open-armed surrender in which there is no feeling but only life. (*October*, 1885.)

17.

I didn't naturally get very deep into *Natural Philosophy* [Deschanel's], but any little is better than nothing, and makes me want to know more. The difficulty is to get the right sort of book. It ought not to be elementary, and yet it ought to deal with the elements of the subjects. I must say the general impression that I always get from dipping into such things is, how very much *alive* what is ordinarily called 'dead matter' is. What bothers me most is the place of feeling in the whole concern. Sometimes it seems as if there would be nothing without it (for everything seems only expressible in terms of actual or possible human experience, and this apparently implies feeling); sometimes as if everything would go on just the same, whether it were there or not, for the energy of which feeling is a mode or accompaniment does not seem to *be* feeling. (*January*, 1886.)

18.

I sometimes think one might conceive of God as a being who might experience what we call the intensest pain and pleasure without being 'affected' by it—who made everything his own without becoming any of it. I wonder whether this is at all what happens with human beings; whether, for example, violent 'physical' pleasures and pains are ever, to the people who are experiencing them, the actual material out of which poems could be made on the spot. If this is conceivable, then it would be conceivable conversely that what is ordinarily called 'thinking' or 'imagining' could include and be the whole thing, without the help of what is ordinarily called sensible experience. And certainly there doesn't seem much sense in what one is told about Jesus, or again in what people like Hegel say about 'thought,' unless something of this sort is true [1]. (*June*, 1886.)

19.

. . . I am pretty sure that mere sorrow—the mere sense of loss,—however it may hurt one at the time with a sort of physical pain, has no power to do permanent harm, unless it is poisoned with regret in some form or other. And for regret as such there is no cure, just because it is the sense of something irrevocable. It can only be done away with by the belief that really nothing *is* irrevocable, that, while it is true that the past cannot be undone, it is only true so long as you admit that there *is* a 'past'; once get rid of time, and the past is annihilated, except so far as it is an element in an

[1 Cf. No. 13.]

eternal now. I suspect something of this kind is the real meaning of the 'doctrine' of absolution.

. . . . . .

I do not believe in the least that growing physically older has any necessary connexion with loss of vitality. Of all the doctrines of modern science I suppose about the best established is that, in order that anything should come into being, something else must cease to be; that is the true law of sacrifice. The only question is, *what* ceases to be and *what* comes to be. *All* living means dying; that is obvious; it is a merely arbitrary convention which gives to certain processes the prerogative of being called 'life' and 'death.' I can honestly say for my own part that I feel *more alive* now than I did twenty years ago, although I am equally conscious of being much nearer to death. (*October*, 1886.)

20.

I should think literature was maddening to lecture on, but I sometimes long to have a say about something of the sort. They are beginning to talk again about a modern literature school here [at Oxford]. I hope it won't be done in a hurry, but it does seem to me that, if (as seems likely) fewer people are going to learn Greek and Latin, we ought to begin making preparations to supply their place. The discussions about it make one feel how very little the classics owe their present position in education to their being *literature*, for the first thing the ordinary person says is, 'For heaven's sake don't let us murder Shakespeare, &c., by treating them as we treat Aeschylus and Sophocles.'

I suppose the truth is very few people have much idea of what a 'literary' education means or ought to mean.

If the essence of it is to hand on from generation to generation the finest human thoughts said in the finest way, with all the incidental training which the study of the outworks of the subject brings (attention, exactness, memory, reasoning, &c.), then surely it must be humbug to say that a literature in one's own language cannot be made educational. Only one must acquiesce (as one acquiesces in the case of the classics) in the results being grotesquely small and disappointing in the majority of people, as ludicrous in fact (*mutatis mutandis*) as a bad Latin verse is, compared to Virgil.

The one important thing seems to be that people should be clear as to whether they really believe that the nurture of the soul does require the ideas of other souls; if they don't, the sooner they throw up literary education the better; if they do, they *must* accept literature as the staple, for better or for worse. (*December*, 1886.)

21.

Many of the things you say in comparing poetry with other arts raise a great many questions, some of which I have been thinking about lately. The difficulty which seems to me to lie at the root of the whole subject of the philosophy of art is as to the nature of *symbolism* (in its widest sense). The ultimate fact seems to be that one idea (taking 'idea' to mean any piece of consciousness) is related in various ways to another, or rather that the *meaning* of any one idea *is* another idea; so that all language and all expression is a form of *translation*. And it sometimes strikes one that the ordinary language about metaphor, simile, analogy, &c., is only one half the truth; i.e. that instead of saying the metaphor is a transference from the proper sense of a word or object, one might just

as truly say the 'proper' sense is a transference from (or more probably a limitation of) the metaphorical sense. What is called the 'proper' sense seems in most cases to mean little more than the customary or else the historically earlier.

I can't help also doubting whether there is really much point in contrasting the medium of poetical expression with that of other arts, as less 'sensuous,' or as 'ideas' in contrast with sense. In the last resort all words are sounds or sights, actual or suggested. No doubt the sound or sight of them *in itself* is very insignificant; but 'in itself' merely means, 'if they are regarded *not* as words'; and then the same applies to music, which is unmeaning if you regard it *merely* as sound. All I mean is that the concrete fact which one has in each case is, not certain sensations on the one side and certain non-sensible ideas on the other, but (alike in all the arts) a whole of variously related or formed sensations, actual or possible. It is not that sensations suggest ideas, but that the 'ideas' *are* the form of the sensations. Poetry is sound of such a nature that, to an organization of a certain kind, it means or is such and such an infinity of other things. The sound suggests these other things because it is an element in them. How far it is a *necessary* element in them depends on the organization in contact with them, just as it apparently does in music, for there are people who say they get more pleasure (I believe) from reading a score than from hearing it played, because possibly the sound would jar on them, somewhat as a person's voice may jar and spoil the effect of poetry.

And in the end it does not seem to matter much whether one conceives of a perfect imagination as one to

which there was no 'sense,' or as one to which 'sense' was everything; for by calling an experience merely 'sensible,' we always appear to mean that it is (comparatively) isolated; the more it passes into and is passed into by other experiences, the more 'spiritual' it gets.

But I suspect all this is too remote from the consideration of poetry proper, in which one must start from the undoubted fact that the sensuous element gets its spiritualization in different ways (sometimes to its advantage, sometimes to its disadvantage) from other arts. And no doubt too, however much one may believe that there *is* a point at which *all* 'expression' meets, and that in that sense one form of it cannot be more spiritually capable than another, yet as a matter of human experience there is a great difference in the nature and capacities of the poetic, pictorial, musical organizations, and in what their products can and cannot do for average people. (*January*, 1887.)

22.

I think I am getting to think less of the difference between educating and writing. I feel, more than I used to do, that the fact that men like Socrates and Christ wrote nothing does somehow go along with their unique greatness; and, without considering oneself one of them, I do seem to see that, *if* one could literally live one's theories and beliefs, it would be something greater than any book one would be likely to write. No doubt the great bulk of teachers are unable, from various circumstances, to put the best of themselves into their teaching; but if they could, there remains the old fact, as Plato says in the *Phaedrus*, that it is the only way in which one mind really comes into living contact with

another. I suppose any one, even a genius, would feel to some extent hampered by an examination system, although it is impossible to say how far the hampering effects are due to one's own weakness. However, I do not at all mean that the attraction of writing is less strong to me than before; but when I look round, and see the crowds of men in a state of spiritual destitution, conscious or unconscious, and the poverty of the average educator, I do feel that no knowledge and no imagination and no force of character would be enough to meet the demands. (*February*, 1887.)

23.

The doctor must have a strange experience of human nature in these kinds of places; so many of the people must be invalids, mental or moral, and yet not mad. Though indeed one gets to feel more and more what rot these distinctions are, and that the highest health is the highest spirituality, with the proviso that the highest health *must* involve the suffering or depression of *some* part of the organism.

. . . . . .

I have been reading a queer book called *Sympneumata*, edited by Laurence Oliphant, and apparently dictated by his wife. It is vilely written, and most people would put it down as humbug, but I believe it is a real experience and contains truth. It goes on the hypothesis that the deity is a bi-sexual being—the eternal union of masculine and feminine—and that the physical division of what we call man and woman is a degeneration, which humanity will slowly retrieve itself from. Of course the ideas are as old as the hills, and gain nothing by the sort of mock scientific language in which they are put out. But it

fetches me because I can't help believing that somehow or other there *is* a real point of contact between the 'love of mankind,' as represented by Jesus and as concentrated in the idea of 'God is love,' and the 'das ewig-weibliche zieht uns hinan' of Goethe: and that the world won't be happy till it finds this out. If it were not such a dreadfully difficult and dangerous subject to treat, a real investigation of the history of love in all its forms would probably throw more light on human nature and life than any other. (*August*, 1887.)

. . . . . .

It seems as if for the complete thing [making a man not only forget his unpleasant self, but feel that he is living over again in something or somebody else] there must be both consciousness of acting and of being acted upon, of φιλεῖσθαι as well as of φιλεῖν. It may be that as long as one is conscious of the two as separable, one has never known what real love means, and I am quite ready to believe that it is so. But somehow or other, human weakness and self-deception and egotism apart, it does seem as if self-realization *must* include something *like* the 'ewig-weibliche.' (*November*, 1888.)

24.

I have come lately to understand dimly what Green meant (or might have meant) by the resurrection, and along with this what Plato and others have meant by saying that life is a learning to die. The physiologists tell one that all our senses are differentiations of touch, and if one follows this out one gets to queer results: e. g. our present visual experience may be, to that which would be possible to a more perfect organization, what our present tactual experience is compared with our

visual. Conceive what it would be if we got through our stomach material for poetry and music. What is usually called 'body' really means a *very* elementary and limited susceptibility; the more 'bodily' it is, the more limited it is. This is the only ground of distinction that I can see between 'higher' and 'lower' feelings and perceptions. Fear of death, or clinging to life, is fear of, or clinging to, certain fragments of ourselves. If we could 'energize' a great deal more continuously than most of us can, we might experience physical death literally without being aware of it. Or again, the coarser sort of pain would become what the sense of a slight discord is in music, or a bad piece of reasoning, while the coarser sorts of pleasure would become corresponding elements in a whole into which at present they are absolutely incapacitated from entering. I am getting more and more convinced that what is usually called 'having an idea of something,' or being 'conscious of something,' is just *not* the idea or the consciousness of that which we say it is, but of something else. It is the fringe, so to say, of an alien matter, and means that we are *not* conscious fully. At any rate nothing can be more opposite than what is ordinarily called 'thinking' of a thing (which means the weakened reproduction of it in memory, and is rightly despised by 'practical' people), and what most philosophers have meant by 'thinking' (which is the productive energy of the discoverer and the artist and the practical man alike). In the latter sense, the more productive one is, the less (in the ordinary sense) one is conscious *of* being productive; for being conscious *of* being productive means being productive partly in one way and partly in another; in fact, divided (and therefore limited) consciousness. I am sure

most people get into dreadful confusion about 'conscious' and 'unconscious.' They have a right instinct that to do a thing unconsciously is to do *it* and nothing else; and when a philosopher tells them that self-conscious activity is the prerogative of man, they think it means that, whenever they do a right thing or enjoy life, they ought to divide themselves into two and be able to see themselves as others see them.

If one applies this, it seems that what one calls 'bodily sensations,' &c., are no more sensations *of* body than the highest conceivable thoughts or aspirations. Of course there is nothing new in this; but I am sure I used to think that the difference between, e. g., higher and lower pleasure lay in the fact that one *was* a consciousness *of* one's palate, while the other was *not* consciousness *of*, e. g., one's brain. If one really wants to compare them locally, so to say, one ought to compare a little piece of flesh surface, limited and comparatively monotonous, with (say) miles of country with infinite variety of shape and colour, or the solar system; but in neither case is there any sense in saying that the consciousness *is* 'anywhere.' (*February*, 1888.)

25.

I sometimes get glimpses of a state in which one would not be aware of what is ordinarily called one's 'body,' but they are only glimpses. I say 'ordinarily called,' for the more I think of it the harder I find it to say what *ought* to be called body. It seems quite a relative term, and the sense in which any given person uses it depends on where they happen to draw the circle round certain experiences.

What you say of taking a more 'materialistic' view of

people is quite intelligible to me. I confess that to me it is almost a matter of indifference whether I talk of 'material' or 'spiritual.' I mean that the continuity of life and existence is borne in on me more and more. A stomach-ache is a spiritual fact as much as an ecstatic vision, only an intensely limited one. I suppose it wouldn't do to say simply that the difference in all cases is one of extent, but at present I find it hard to say anything more definite. And I am prepared to find that people of a very 'spiritual' nature are not people whose stomachs (e.g.) play *less* part in their life, but *more*. What embarrasses one at every turn is, I find, that there is a certain conventional average of experience which sets the standard of what people call 'real,' &c. I believe that even this standard is far more fluctuating than we generally suppose, but it at least has fixed associations, and we seem to classify and divide the world according to it.

. . . . . .

I wonder whether the world will ever come to value people for what is really valuable in them. I suppose 'moral' worth ought simply to mean whatever contributes in any way to whatever the person who is talking thinks the best thing, or thing most worth having in the world. What I like in Greek philosophy is that it puts that point of view so simply. It sickens one to hear the ordinary enlightened man talk about morality, whether he talks for or against it. He almost never seems to realize that there *can* be only one standard of absolute value for things, and that ultimately the morally 'good' must either mean that (and then *everything* that is really worth having or being has 'moral' value), or else must describe some special form of such absolute value (in

which case 'moral' will be co-ordinate with, not supreme over, artistic, political, economical, &c.). (*November*, 1888.)

26.

I don't see any way out of the up-and-down existence which you describe. I feel more and more the horrible contrast between rare moments and my average level of achievement. I know that it is only a man's self that realizes this: to the outsider you look much of a piece . . . I do believe that the moments are the things that give one what is best, and that they don't really pass, however much one may fall away from them. In the greater part of life it seems as if one must consent to be wrapped round with custom; but the naked touch of reality, when it does come, is like flame through the veins, and each time it comes it leaves the blood running a little quicker. (*May*, 1889.)

27.

I sometimes begin to wonder whether it is any good trying to expound the relation of art to morality. And yet one knows that is just the thing where people are most apt to go wrong, and also just the thing about which they are most bothered if they think at all. I think what I should like to make people feel is that, so far as they are *really* in an 'artistic' state of mind, they *cannot* be in an 'immoral' state. That, for example, mere killing, or stealing, or fornicating, or lying, cannot be poetical or in any sense beautiful, or tragic, or humorous; and that conversely, as soon as there is any beauty, or tragedy, or humour in the thing, it ceases to be *mere* killing, and so on. But I see this could only

be shown if one could get people not to be afraid of admitting that there is no such thing as 'killing' in the abstract, or as 'absolute' good or evil. They do practically admit it when (with whatever misgivings) they allow their 'better feelings' to be exercised on things which, except for those better feelings, they would simply condemn or look away from.

If you take *Antony and Cleopatra*, for instance, I should have thought you could safely say to any one, 'By all means go and live like Antony, if you feel disposed to do so by reading Shakespeare; only remember that you must be ready to die like him; otherwise it is not Shakespeare's Antony that you are imitating.' And I should be inclined to point the moral, not by saying, 'You see what lust can bring a great man to,' but, 'You see what you must be prepared to face if you are going to make lust a grand thing, a thing to throw away an empire for.'

What I feel very strongly is that most people, when they take what they call the artistic point of view, really do no such thing. They have no conception, as a rule, of the distance of their ordinary life from that which the artist represents. They are often just as bad, though in a different way, as the Philistine who sees in Cleopatra nothing but a common prostitute.

I couldn't help thinking of this last Sunday when Bright preached in our chapel. It was about 'This is a hard saying,' and put very well, I thought, what an enormous way off the ordinary comfortable Christianity of decent people is from what Christ meant. It seems to me to apply to all great men. One is not, as a rule, fit company for them at all. How many people could really *laugh* with Aristophanes—laugh without any

drawback? It sometimes seems as if *any* emotion, if sufficiently thorough-going, would take one to heaven.

But of course the practical question is how to deal with ourselves as we are for most of the week. Still, even so, it seems to me that what one most wants is to be made to *admit*, not in words only, but in feeling, that in order to experience anything at all great we have got to lift ourselves up to it, not to pull it down to ourselves; and that *so far* art is not a pastime any more than politics or religion, though it is a real recreation if we do succeed in lifting ourselves up to it.

Another way to approach the thing would be to start by considering what are the conditions of *θεωρία*—what it really means 'to look at' anything. It seems to me that the only tenable antithesis between 'action' and 'contemplation' is that between the alternate periods of attaining and attainment, into which human life necessarily falls. But if so, one ought to be at least as careful of oneself in moments of attainment as in those of attaining. (*December*, 1889.)

28.

I wish they had buried Browning at Florence as he wished. I used to fancy that Bello Sguardo would do for the scene of the *Grammarian's Funeral*. Have you seen his last volume? It is wonderfully the right thing that he should have ended up with the utterance of eternal youth. The life of such a man *is* immortality, and one could say that he had realized as much as man can the precept *ὅτι μάλιστα ἀθανατίζειν*. The more one thinks of the way in which the great men have spoken of life, the more one sees that by eternity they have meant the present fact. It is frightfully hard to realize,

though I believe the hardness comes mainly from one's inability to take things simply, like a child. One is always 'striving and crying,' instead of letting the wind of the world carry one 'where it listeth'[1]. (*December*, 1889.)

29.

Would not it be worth while to try and set apart a little bit of every day for *absolute* rest, and to stick to it? I believe it could be done by any one if they chose. Half an hour would be better than nothing. I am continually being struck by the truth that 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' It sometimes seems as if the higher you go in the scale of activity, the less method there is. No doubt one reason is that it is so much easier to methodize a simple trade like money-making than one like writing books. And also that the more elementary the demands which life makes, the easier in a sense it is to respond to them: the 'worth-whileness' of it is so obvious. Just as again a comparatively ordinary man can be got to train for 'a corruptible crown,' but only an extraordinary one for 'an incorruptible.' I am sure the *principles* of all methods of acquiring mastery over anything are substantially the same. One has got to begin with the alphabet—to become a little child. Instead of which it seems to me one is perpetually beginning with the hardest things—solving the existence of God before one has ever seen what it means to exist

[1] [There is a reference to Browning in a letter written about five years before this. 'I do understand old Browning's unconquerable feeling that there *must* be some more chances for him (or for something that somehow includes him) somewhere. I expect that about the time one comes to die one will be beginning to know how to live.']

at all. If I had to begin over again I should like to try to master the *elements* of a few big things. Till I have done this the rest is all confusion, and talking about it is beating the air. And whenever I at all understand the elements, I seldom find much difficulty in finding 'applications' everywhere. *Anything* presents every kind of problem, and I can't help thinking that it would be much better for many metaphysically minded people if they would think about the things which they happen to feel and have real experience of, instead of taking their subjects and lines of thought from other people's systems. I had a curious illustration a little while ago of what I suppose is the 'infinity' of difference. I was thinking about musical intervals, and suddenly realized that under certain conditions (when there happens to be no unit of measurement present in one's mind) the difference which turned out to be a semitone was felt to be as great as those which turned out to be much larger. So too in working at the *Parmenides* I have continually felt that if I could once get clear about these elementary characteristics of 'being,' I should see my way through my own being or that of anybody else. And I sometimes try the experiment of extending the name 'being' (as the Greeks did) from things like God and man to everything, and see what happens.

I am trying in connexion with an elementary logic lecture to come to some notion of the elementary nature of thinking, and to see how the traditional accounts of the subject are half-understood or half-obliterated attempts to formulate it.

Do you remember our talking about spiritualism in London? After that I have found myself gravitating more and more to the subject as one for a big book—

'Studies of the idea of spirit.' If one thinks, the three antitheses of 'spirit and letter,' 'spirit and flesh,' 'spirit and matter,' cover most of the big problems in art, morality, and science, as 'the holy spirit' and 'spiritualism' cover most of those in religion. I believe it would take one through many of the big people of the world, and it would embrace most of the questions about 'personality,' which I used to think of as the most promising subject for me. The worst of it no doubt is that, as Milton said of the poet, a man who is to write well of spirit must be himself spiritual. Still I suppose one would find the same to be true in all subjects: you can only write of what you have *been*.

Have you ever thought about the treatment of language from the point of view of *what it does* compared with other functions or activities? The common contrast of words and things, or words and acts—or rather the division into words and things, &c., seems so to disguise the fact that words are just a form of action like any other, and a form which has its own specific properties. I mean that one could define more or less the various powers of words (rhetorical, poetic, logical), and compare them with the powers of acting on men in other ways (by example, by look, by gesture, by music, pictures, &c.). It seems to me so enlightening to extend the physical notion of energy to everything (which is simply Aristotelianism), and to feel that *all* that we call things, properties, &c., are forms of action and reaction, and that this *is* 'being.' Language is an inviting subject, because nearly all people realize more or less both the gigantic power and also the utter impotence of words: and one wants to see where lies their power and where their impotence. Men will die for a word, and yet

'words, words, words,' is the expression of all futility. (*January*, 1890.)

30.

Your last letter interested me very much—especially what you said about 'sentiment.' I suppose one must acquiesce in the word's being used on the whole in a depreciatory sense; and in that case, though I can't define it, it seems to occupy a tolerably definite place in my mind. I think of it as one among those weakened forms or travesties of something great, by which human nature always seems to be haunted, or rather into which it seems to be always slipping. There are lots of them. Religion becomes 'cant' or (an intermediate stage) 'self-righteousness,' or, again, 'sectarianism'; public spirit becomes 'party-feeling'; originality becomes 'eccentricity,' sympathy 'weakness,' strength of character 'hardness,' imagination 'dreaming,' metaphysic 'playing with words,' eloquence 'rhetoric,' and passion becomes 'sentiment.' By passion I mean self-absorption or self-surrender—the identification of one's whole self with any object. It seems to become 'sentiment' either when the object is not big enough to absorb the self, but yet the self talks about it as if it *were* big enough, or again when only a little bit of the self is really interested, but the talk is as if the whole of it were. But it always seems in these matters that one must leave infinite room for differences of individuality. It is passion to be able to feel,

> 'To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears':

but to the huge majority of people the words would only express sentiment. So too, I suppose, a great deal of love poetry is to most people merely sentimental,

especially that kind which works much with 'conceits': these to most people only engage a little bit of themselves and so leave them cold.

'Morbid' is always a dubious word, but to me the best way to get at it is to think of disease in bodily function. I suppose the only general thing one can say is that function is diseased when it takes up too much or too little of the whole function of the organism. So with imagination, feeling, &c., one tends to call it morbid in another person when one thinks that one could not experience it oneself without 'forcing' one's soul—making it all go into one hot-house growth.

Personally, I am more and more convinced that the cure for sentiment, as for all the weakened forms of strong things, is not to refuse to feel it, but to get to feel *more* in it. This seems to me to make the whole difference between a true and a false 'asceticism.' The false goes for getting rid of what one is afraid of; the true goes for using it and making it serve. The one empties, the other fills; the one abstracts, the other concentrates. Don't you think half the troubles of life come from being wrongly *afraid* of things—especially afraid of oneself? (*February*, 1890.)

31.

Have you heard—I suppose so—of George Wilson's death? Ned wrote to tell us two days ago. As he said, one feels that a bit of sunshine is gone out of life. I don't think I ever knew a man who was so utterly unpretentious and unadorned, and yet who was such a real force wherever he found himself. It made one realize what ἀρετή properly is—a quality as definite as that of a sweet air or a joyous face. I often wish all the

'virtues' could be felt in this way, and 'morality' too. One is obliged out of concession to one's own weakness to express them in terms of their 'results'; but it is good to feel occasionally that their results are *not* they—that the quality of courage or generosity or chastity is not exhausted, or even necessarily expressed, in the acts of standing fire, or giving money, or sexual abstinence, but is a vitalizing, health-giving force, for which men ought to feel the better, or else ought to admit that it is humbug to call it 'virtue' at all.

. . . . . .

I am so glad you are taking in the spring. How everything may be summed up as 'health'! Did it ever strike you that Christ was never 'ill,' and that he could go to sleep in a storm, as Skobeleff could do in a battle? (*April*, 1890.)

32.

. . . It isn't a matter which can be settled by argument (in the ordinary sense of the word). I don't mean that it is all blind feeling, far from it; but what most people call argument starts by begging all the vital questions and ends in mere sword-play. . . . I hate controversy, and I would never willingly shake anybody's beliefs, if they are *real* beliefs—if they in any way, however crude and however mixed up with wrong things, express their real experiences at those times in their life when they are face to face with themselves. But if one *is* to argue about doctrines, the matter seems to me to be very simple. Take the 'divinity of Christ.' What does any one mean by it? Does he mean that a being was born of a woman without the help of a man? Supposing such a thing to have happened by some abnormal physio-

logical arrangement, has it *anything whatever* to do with anything that can be called 'divine'? Is a person more worthy of love, devotion, worship, because he was abnormally born? Or, to put it the other way, is there anything *un*-divine in being produced by a man and a woman?

Take the 'resurrection.' Suppose for the sake of argument that there was good reason to think that somebody had appeared to die and then had come to life again. Would this have *anything* to do with his being divinely great and good? What has bodily death or bodily birth to do with the nature, call it divine or what you will, which we feel to be the highest?

It seems to me that argument about miracles is idle beating the bush. Let them all have happened, i. e. let the physical facts have taken place, they remain *physical* facts, and have no more or less to do with God than eating and drinking and sleeping. Whatever else 'God' means, it means the highest we can think of—something in which all that we love and adore in human beings and nature exists without any alloy. It is just blasphemy to suppose that the divinity of a man who comes nearer to God than other men consists in some abnormality of his physical organization.

They tell one that St. Paul 'believed in the resurrection.' Perhaps he did. The question is, What did it mean to him? It meant 'dying and living with Christ,' i. e. practically, living a life of perfect self-devotion to what he thought best. If (as is likely) he mixed up this with the supposed bodily coming to life of Christ, it only shows that great men are liable to confusion or superstition, but it is no reason why we should do the same. What has made Christianity an invincible power in the

world has been the conviction that somehow or other the life of love is the best, the divinest, life we can conceive, and that every one who even for moments knows what it is to lose himself in others is doing what God does eternally. It was because apparently Jesus made people feel that he was living this life that he made such an extraordinary impression. But, as always has happened with great men, the world at large could only take him in through all sorts of distorting *media*. The wonderfulness of him got coarsened into all kinds of 'miraculous' attributes, with which it really had nothing whatever to do. We *all* do the same in our various ways: we can only take things in with all kinds of associations which hang on to our own habits or natures; we are all superstitious somewhere; we can't just see what is beautiful or good as it is; we have to make a mystery of it—as if it weren't quite 'mysterious' enough already in its sheer beauty or goodness.

Religious orthodoxy is one form of this general tendency. It says, you cannot have the spiritual without a lot of stuff which has nothing to do with spirituality. I don't think it at all follows that one should not join in so-called orthodox rites or forms, if it helps one. They are not the private property of a particular lot of people. If I choose to take the sacrament as a simple way of expressing that I have got to try to be one, body and soul, with Christ, i.e. with the best personality I can conceive, no one has a right to stop me. But of course the consciousness that other people may misunderstand one is worrying, and I confess myself that I don't seem to get at my best times in any of these ways as a rule.

If an 'orthodox' attacks me, I am perfectly prepared to admit that he lives better than I do, but what I can

never admit is that his life is the expression of his *orthodoxy*. So far as it is good, unselfish, it is the sort of life that Jesus lived; but it isn't really the supposed miraculous birth or return to life of Jesus that gives the man the strength to live it.

This sounds horribly preachy, and I hate writing it, for you know well enough that I don't live it. Still I have a real conviction at times of something that is in and about me, in the consciousness of which I am free from fear and desire,—something which would make it easy to do the most otherwise difficult thing without any other motive except that it was the one thing worth doing. I don't care what anybody calls it—'God' does as well as any other word—it is just what one would give all the world to *be*, the thing one can say least about, and yet the thing that all one's best thoughts and acts seem to be a feeble expression of. And what angers me is the assumption of certain people that this 'God' belongs to them and can only be bought at their shop. Heaven knows it is hard enough to get at *any* price, and if they have got it, or any of it, they ought to be thankful, and not try to bottle it up and label it as their patent.

. . . Religion isn't worth talking about if it does not mean the simplest, most elementary, if you like most 'primitive,' convictions that one finds in oneself when one is stripped of all conventional trappings. Most 'religious controversy' seems to me to get nowhere near the real thing. I think that book[1] does do something to make one feel the *human* thing in religion, though I daresay it might be done much better. It reduces everything to certain ineradicable wants and experiences, and tries to show how all the dogmas, &c., have grown up from

[1] [Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*.]

people's losing their hold on the *real* thing and then trying to get it again by feats of intellectual ingenuity. . . . But after all no books will do the thing for one. One must ask oneself what it means, and cling to the rare times when it does mean something. (Probably the Spring of 1890.)

33.

I had never been before on the sort of places we went up—mostly rocks—and found it as much as I could do[1]. But I got better as I went on, and am certainly glad to have had the experience. I don't think I can ever get along without occasionally doing something physically violent. It seems necessary to prevent φιλοσοφία degenerating into μαλακία. Or rather perhaps it helps me to realize that the qualities wanted in what are called 'physical' efforts are really just as much wanted in what are called 'mental.' I am coming to believe more and more that it is only a question of organization where a man draws the line between 'moral' and 'non-moral.' To every one there is a point somewhere where the sense of a better and a worse comes home to him—where he feels that it matters what he does. To one man it is in a game, to another in behaviour to women, to another in writing, to another in money-making, and so on. A 'moral man' par excellence ought to mean a man who has this sense in a comparatively great number of circumstances (instead of meaning, as it usually does, one who has it in one or two special classes of circumstances). The trouble is that so comparatively few things 'matter much' to one: to the distinctions of most things one is morally blind.

[1] [Nettleship was climbing in Switzerland with two friends more experienced in mountaineering than himself.]

We had wonderful views from all the tops—views mostly of the same kind, in which the Dent Blanche, Weisshorn, &c. were the prominent features. I always find it is the chance and exceptional appearances that impress me most: the effect of the mere panoramic view does not last very long. And I fancy the strongest aggregate impression that I get is that of the mere fact that these things exist at all, in absolute independence of anything ordinarily called 'human,' and yet ready to speak to one if one comes to them in the right way. Do you find the distinction between organic and inorganic things get less to you? I certainly do. I can *fancy* a state of mind in which the pressure of a stone or the slope of a wave would be as living and personal, so to say, as a smile or a gesture. (*August*, 1890.)

34.

I have read nothing almost except the shilling selection from Browning, which certainly gives one food enough. I find a good deal in him of a feeling which has grown on me lately—the feeling how *grateful* one is (or rather perhaps, ought to be) for the existence of the world. I suppose it is the preliminary to the love of the world, which he is also of course very strong about. *Why* should a mountain mean to one mostly a dangerous, or, at best, awful thing? Why can't one take that which it offers itself to one as, as a being doing all it can if only other beings would take it the right way? It seems to me that most of what I call my 'ideas' of things are 'associations' derived from certain few and limited ways in which the things happen to have affected me. And these associations are what get dignified by the name of 'imagination'; though so far from being a symptom of

productiveness, they are just the symptom of inability to look things in the face and take them by the hand. It isn't that one 'personifies' things too much, but too little: or, to put it another way, the personal element with which one invests things is such a wretched shred of one's self—the offspring of one's feeblest fears and desires. I haven't expressed what I mean, but I can't do it properly now. (Stalden, *August*, 1891.)

LECTURES ON LOGIC

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[The course on Logic was opened by an introductory lecture in which it was pointed out that 'Logic,' in Oxford practice, bears a very wide sense, so that the subject, if fully treated, would involve a discussion of (1) the *methods of science*, i.e. the forms of reasoning and discovery; (2) the *psychology* of knowledge, considered as something which differs from other kinds of consciousness and which has a traceable development in the individual and the race; (3) certain *metaphysical* questions inevitably suggested by the fact of knowledge. It was shown that these subjects are connected by the fact that they are concerned in various ways with knowledge; and Logic, therefore, in the widest sense was taken to be the *Theory of Knowledge*. It was suggested that the subject ought to be studied, on the one hand, in one or more of the best modern treatises, and on the other hand historically; and the design of the course was explained to be, first, to give an explanation of some of the terms current in logical treatises, and to discuss a few of the chief problems of Logic; secondly, to supplement this by reference to some of the philosophers of most importance in the history of Logic.

It was Nettleship's usual practice to devote the lectures of the October Term to the former of these objects. The course here reproduced is that of the October Term of 1888, this being the last time that he lectured on Logic. The matter of this course does not differ much from that of the courses of the preceding years, but the order was quite new, as Nettleship attempted to connect most of the subjects he discussed with the idea of the 'Concept.' This new arrangement led to a good deal of repetition, which was probably useful for educational purposes, and which I have not attempted altogether to remove. In Notes A, B, C, some passages from earlier courses are printed. The historical lectures are not reproduced.]

SECTION I

THOUGHT, SENSE, AND IMAGINATION

As all writers on logic would agree that it has something to do with 'thought' or with right 'thinking,' we may begin by asking what is meant by these words.

In English they are sometimes used as almost equivalent to consciousness in general. Sometimes, again, in a rather narrower sense, to 'think' means, like the Greek δοξάζειν, to have an idea or opinion about a thing; and so thought is contrasted with knowledge, as when we say, 'I don't know, but I think so.' But these uses of the words may be set aside as irrelevant to our present purpose: it is not thought, in these senses of the term, that we have to consider in dealing with logic. On the other hand, we have such a phrase as 'a great thinker'; and this at any rate means a man with more than ordinary power of getting at *truth*, a man who does not live in mere opinions but reaches *knowledge*. Again, if we want a person to understand a thing more truly than he already does, we say, 'Think about it and you will see it.' So, too, German writers habitually use the equivalent verb *denken* for that activity of mind of which truth is the product; and from the beginning of Greek philosophy νοεῖν is contrasted with δοξάζειν or αἰσθάνεσθαι, to describe a process issuing in truth, or a state of mind truer than other states. It is with 'thought' regarded as such a process that logic is concerned.

To get a clearer idea of this activity or process, we may best consider it in contrast with certain other activities, especially sense and imagination. The antithesis of thought and sense is immediately connected with the further contrast between science or philosophy and our habitual states of mind; the antithesis of thought and imagination with the further contrast between science or philosophy on the one side, and poetry or art on the other.

From the earliest times good thinking has been regarded as implying, among other attributes, clearness and connectedness. In Plato, for example, there is a constant insistence on the clearness of the thinking state of mind, and the metaphor of light is frequently employed; the thinker, again, to Plato is the man who can trace out connexions rightly, can combine and divide truly. In contrast with these attributes stand the confusion and disconnectedness of our ordinary views of things.

When we attempt to think about a thing in order to get a truer view of it, the first result probably is that we detach from it certain irrelevant concomitants, or separate it from certain associations with which we have wrongly mixed it up. This is technically called 'abstraction,' and all clear thinking is in this sense abstract. As compared with this 'thought' our ordinary idea of a thing is wanting in clearness. This does not mean that the idea is wanting in vividness (which is quite another matter), but that it is unanalyzed, that we are unable to part its constituents clearly from one another, and that some of them are really not relevant to the thing. Thus our first idea of a triangle will be found on reflexion to comprise elements which have nothing to do

with the triangle *quâ* triangle, such as its colour, size, material. When we *think* the triangle we have to leave out, or abstract from, these irrelevant constituents of our idea, and to concentrate our minds on what is relevant. Abstraction is thus the other side of concentration, and a concentrated state of mind is also a very abstract state.

But thinking has not only to abstract and distinguish; it has also to combine and construct. Our ordinary notions are disconnected as well as confused; or rather they are mis-connected. We associate things which have little to do with one another, and we are blind to connexions which are really of great importance. Hence when we learn anything new, i.e. when we think, we have to disunite what seems to us naturally conjoined, and to form new and apparently unnatural combinations.

The results of thinking, therefore, appear, to people who have not thought about the matter in question, to be empty and unreal, or far-fetched and paradoxical. The former, because the conception leaves out what the objector is most familiar with, and gives him 'nothing to take hold of'; the latter, because it brings together things which to the objector seem to have no connexion at all. Conversely, when we praise a man for thinking 'deeply,' we imply that he pierces through superficial associations; and when we say that he has 'width' or 'grasp' of mind, we mean that, starting from ordinary words or objects, he is able to connect many more things with them than people commonly do.

The reason why the antithesis between thought and sense has been one of the first to strike men is that in our ordinary view of things their sensible properties have an altogether disproportionate importance. If you take your conception of anything to which you have not given

much attention, you will generally find that the most prominent features in this conception are sensible properties. These—such properties as colour, shape, weight—are the marks by which we generally know things, although we do not exactly believe that these attributes are the whole of the things. Hence thinking has from the first been described as a way of setting oneself free from the associations of sense. It is important to be clear about the meaning of this phrase, which may seem to suggest that the truest truth would be that which had least to do with the ordinary sense-experience of mankind. But the phrase does not mean that thought involves no element of sense. To think means to be clearly and connectedly conscious, and we can 'think' sensible things just as much as insensible. Nor have we, in thinking, to ignore the sensible properties of things or to think them away (except where, for a given purpose, they are irrelevant). What we have to do is to think them fully and clearly, to see what they are connected with, and how much they make of the thing in question. For example, in our idea of an acquaintance certain sensible characteristics are generally the most prominent feature. These serve, or ought to serve, as symbols for the rest of the person; but they may gradually come to obscure the rest, so that we get a fixed idea of the person which is utterly inadequate. To realize our conception, then, to gain or recover the truth, is not, indeed, to omit these characteristics, but it is to give them their due place in our reconstructed idea.

In passing on to imagination (in the most general sense, not poetic imagination) and the difference between 'imagining' and 'conceiving,' we shall find that this same truth will hold. Our ordinary idea of a thing consists of

'images,' i. e. of sensations reproduced; and the adequacy of the idea depends on how far these images express all the properties, the whole being of the thing. That they should actually express the whole is, of course, impossible; for, as Leibnitz said, all thinking and conversing is essentially symbolic, and every word or idea we use stands for a great deal more than itself. But the danger is that we may allow the symbol to substitute itself for that which it symbolizes, so that a part of its meaning takes the place of the whole. This is what occurs when, as we say, words take the place of things, or language reacts mischievously upon the mind; and it is a danger which can only be avoided by our perpetually rethinking the meanings of our words. Following the same line of thought, we may consider the difference between 'imagining' and 'conceiving,' from one point of view, as the difference between the consciousness of a part of the thing (usually certain visual properties) and the consciousness of something nearer to the whole of it. For example, we can imagine a centaur, if this means simply that we can call up a picture of something half-man and half-horse; but a physiologist might say that he could not conceive or think a centaur. That is, he could not go beyond this picture: when he attempted to think out all that is involved in the idea of a creature half-man and half-horse, his knowledge of the conditions of animal life would forbid him to suppose that this creature actually existed. So that the difference here[1] between imagination

[1] ['The difference *here*'; for another difference is implicitly referred to in the preceding remarks on the confusion of sense and the clearness of thought. The image of a triangle would differ from the thought of a triangle (1) in containing elements irrelevant to triangularity, and (2) in failing to contain elements that ought to be included in 'triangularity.' For the rest, as Nettleship seems to have added, the words

(thus understood) and thought, like the difference between sense and thought, is one between a partial and a relatively complete consciousness of a thing.

So far we have not considered imagination in the more special sense, as the activity which gives rise to poetry and other artistic products. We may now go on to look at the antithesis between thought and imagination as so understood. This antithesis has played a large part in the history of the human mind. Plato, who in his own genius reconciled thought and imagination in a singular degree, gives expression to the antagonism of the two; and the quarrel of poetry and philosophy, which he mentions in the *Republic*, still endures. Yet it is none the less true that there are many affinities between thought and imagination, the scientific and the artistic impulse, alike in their beginnings and in their highest results. They both begin in the indiscriminate desire to express or describe, to show what things are or what they look like. Plato's φιλόσοφος is the man who has by nature an appetite for learning anything and everything; and the child who shows this tendency may equally well turn out a philosopher or an artist. In their highest results, again, the two impulses tend to meet; and in spite of all the contrasts between science and philosophy on the one hand, and works of art on the other, they have points in common.

Thus (*a*), in the first place, both imply a great effort of abstraction and reconstruction. To appreciate a work of high art we have to get rid of commonplace associa-

'image' and 'imagination' *need* not imply these defects, and there is no reason why we should not call the thought of a triangle an image, so long as we know what we mean by the word: for the complete consciousness of a triangle would be a consciousness of visual properties, though not of these alone.]

tions; and if we fail to do this, we degrade or vulgarize the work of art: a poem becomes to us almost nonsense, and a fine piece of sculpture or music appears grotesque, absurd, or even disgusting. In the same way a train of difficult scientific reasoning requires us to rise above ourselves; and it is not itself but mere words to us if we cannot follow it. The great thinker and the great artist both abstract from experience, and they both reconstruct experience, in a manner which most of us only partly understand. And (*b*), in the second place, they both reconstruct not arbitrarily but according to certain laws. In the case of the thinker these are recognized as logical principles, which his readers acknowledge no less than himself. And in the case of the work of art, though it is more difficult—is, indeed, impossible—to fix the point where individual caprice begins, yet an open-minded person admits that there is a right and a wrong, and that, if he fails to understand the work of a great artist, the reason generally lies in his own incapacity to see the right. Alike in the work of thought and in the work of imagination there is the sense of rightness and necessary connexion; of a line, a note or a word we ask, as we do of a step in reasoning, 'Is it exactly right?' And in the work of thought there is the same danger of caprice as in the work of art.

One reason why, in spite of these affinities, science and art diverge so widely, may be seen if we consider the ways in which they depart from ordinary experience and ordinary language. The poet, like the man of science or the philosopher, starts from common facts, and carries us an enormous distance beyond them. We should admit, for example, that there is a connexion between the skylark or the cloud and the images which Shelley associates

with each; but these connexions are far removed from our ordinary experience. In establishing them the poet, like the philosopher, uses the medium of language. The words he employs have, for the most part, a familiar meaning, and in the first instance suggest familiar sense-images; but he requires us to follow him in all sorts of unfamiliar remote applications of these words and images, and to form new associations between them; just as the painter takes common colours or shapes but puts them in a new setting. At the same time, while the poet or artist enlarges and transforms our ordinary experience, he does not desert it, but still employs it as the medium of a new meaning. The difficulty and danger of art both arise from these facts. Its difficulty is that it requires us to make out of something sensible and familiar something new and beautiful. Its danger is that, as it uses familiar materials, the reader or spectator, instead of following it in the transformation of these materials, may remain in his own ordinary images and emotions; so that the painter, for example, instead of revealing to the spectator what is beautiful may merely suggest to him what is sensual. It is on this fact that much of Plato's antagonism to art is based.

Philosophy and science, like poetry, have words for their medium; and like poetry they start from common objects and range over the world. But while poetry ranges over a world of sense-images, the scientific man or the philosopher cannot *show* you his world; you must think it. And while the images suggested by the words in poetry are, at least in some degree, familiar, science and philosophy move away from the familiar at once. They seem bent on eliminating from words all their ordinary significance, and treating them, as far

as possible, as mere signs of a new meaning which may have but little obvious connexion with the old. Thus in studying any particular science we have almost to learn a new language, and to a certain extent every philosopher has a vocabulary of his own [1]. The result is that to the world at large the language of science and philosophy seems formal and pedantic, cold and unfeeling. And when either science or philosophy is 'popularized,' that is, when an attempt is made to bring its ideas nearer to the fancy of ordinary people, there is always a fear that these ideas may be made interesting at the cost of being falsified.

Although there is a great difference between thought and imagination, there seems to be no necessary antagonism between logical and imaginative truth. Unless we are prepared to say that imagination is essentially irrational, there must be a common basis of logic or reason in both. Still what we commonly call logic has its own laws or principles, which are not to be confused with those of any other art.

[1] It is true, of course, that philosophers differ greatly in this matter. Some, like Locke, use the ordinary language of the educated; the advantage of which is that they appeal to a large number of readers, the disadvantage that they tend to share the inconsistency and looseness of ordinary language. Plato, again, is distinguished by his use of the language of imagination; and therefore some readers complain that his philosophy is 'mere poetry,' while to others he conveys more than any other philosopher. It is true, also, that no philosopher can wholly free himself from the ordinary associations of words. The line between scientific and imaginative language is a vanishing line. In the wildest poetry there is logic, and in the most abstract philosophy there is metaphor.

SECTION II

THE VALUE OF THEORY

LOGIC may be called the theory of knowledge. Let us ask, then, what we mean (1) when we contrast the theory of a thing with the thing itself, and again (2) when we oppose 'theory' to 'fact.'

(1) The phrase 'theory of' is generally understood to imply that the theory, and that of which it is the theory, are two separate and independent things. And in a certain sense this is obviously true; for, as we say, we can know the theory of a thing without being able to do it, and we can do a thing without knowing the theory of it. Yet, if we consider, we shall find that really, in the first of these cases, what we know is not the theory of the *thing*, but only the theory of *part* of it; or, in other words, that our theory is imperfect. And, in the second case, we shall find that what we do is not the thing but only a part of it; or, in other words, that our doing is imperfect doing. Thus the real fact indicated by the phrases in question is that we may know part of a thing without knowing it all, and may do a thing partly without doing it all. Action, in the fullest sense, would also be theory; it would be doing with full consciousness of what we were doing. Theory, in the fullest sense, would also be action; we could only fully understand counting in the act of counting. But in practice 'looking' (*θεωρία*) and 'doing' fall more or less apart, and more or less succeed one another,

and to a certain extent each can go on independently; and it is to this imperfect understanding and this imperfect action that we commonly appropriate the names of theory and action.

We may illustrate this by considering, first, cases of manifestly imperfect action. For instance, a person who is said to be able to do a thing without understanding it generally does the thing, as we say, 'empirically' or 'mechanically.' One sign that he does it 'empirically' is that, if the circumstances are changed, he is at sea. He cannot do the thing, because his acquaintance with it is bound up with certain circumstances, and, these being changed, the 'thing' is changed to him. But this really means that his doing of the thing is imperfect, or that what he does is not the thing but only a fragment of it,—that this 'it' in its truth involves the new circumstances. In the same way the 'mechanical' doing of a thing is not, in the full sense, the doing of that thing, but a partial doing of it, or (if one pleases) not the doing of *it*. For example, we should all admit that a man who does his duty mechanically does not, in the full sense, do his *duty*.

Now, in the second place, take the other phrase, 'I know it theoretically, but I can't do it.' Here the 'it' in the first clause has not the same sense as the 'it' in the second. It is true that the man cannot do the whole thing, but no more does he know the whole thing: he really has the theory of a mere fragment of it. 'Theory' in common parlance always means such partial knowledge, though in the case of certain subjects the 'theory' spoken of is much more partial than in the case of others, and therefore is spoken of with contempt. It is curious that *θεωρία* with Aristotle meant just the

opposite of this partial knowledge; it meant the *full* consciousness of the object.

Again, what is really meant by the phrase, 'That is true in theory, but it won't hold practically'? It seems to imply two different standards of truth, but in reality the 'theory' here again is a merely partial knowledge. When it is said of a statement in Political Economy that it is true in theory, this means that it is true if certain conditions only are considered; and when it is said that the statement will not hold in practice, this means that it would have to be modified if all the conditions were considered.

(2) To come to the antithesis of theory and fact, let us consider the saying, 'All theory is based upon, and derived from, facts'.[1] This naturally suggests that there is something, called 'the facts,' which we are supposed to know at starting, and that by reflexion or thought we reproduce these facts in a weaker form. If so, it is natural to ask what the value of the theory can be, since it was already contained in the known facts and is only a feeble reproduction of them. The whole fabric of developed knowledge, on this view, would be based on facts more true than itself; and the more we thought, the further we should get from reality. Whereas, in truth, the thought or reflexion which is here mistaken for a continually weaker reproduction, is a progressive activity, advancing from the more limited and isolated to the more connected and full.

It is, no doubt, the case that in English we often do give the name of 'thought' or 'reflexion' to something which does not deserve the name—to the otiose reproduction of parts of some previous experience; just as

[1] [See further, pp. 168–9.]

we give the name of imagination to the retention or recovery of some part of a sense-perception. And *this* 'thought' or 'reflexion' certainly has no value: it is the 'pale cast' of this 'thought' that 'sicklies o'er the native hue of resolution'; and it is this kind of thought that we have in mind when we say, 'Don't think about the thing, but do it.' Yet we admit that imagination—the imagination of a poet, for example—is not merely reproductive, but productive; and in the same way genuine thought is productive, originative. It is the gradual discovery of the truth about a fact, the coming to realize the fact more and more. The fact at starting is hardly a fact to us at all; it becomes more and more a fact as we think; and it is this genuine 'thought' that we have in mind when we say, 'Think about the thing, and you will do it.'

To study the theory of a thing, then, ought to mean to rethink the thing, and in so doing to recreate it for ourselves; which is the only way in which the fact can become really the fact for us. To study the theory of knowledge should mean, accordingly, to realize gradually what the fact called knowledge means. The use of language; discovery, observation, experimentation; reasoning, judging, proof; force, space, time; causation, subject, object—these are all facts, parts (to speak roughly) of the great fact called knowledge. For a man to realize something of what is implied in this fact assuredly has its value or 'use.' It means that he is so far better off, has more in him, is more in contact with reality. And as reality is one, and all truths are ultimately connected, a person who is in a truer state of mind about one part of reality, is so far in a more favourable position for understanding any other part.

'Philosophiren,' says Novalis, 'ist dephlegmatisiren, vivificiren'; to philosophize is to get rid of one's phlegm, to acquire a vivid consciousness of some aspect of reality. This is the value of theory or thinking; but thinking which is not also producing, thinking which leaves experience what it was before, has no value[1].

[1] There is in our use of 'conscious' and 'consciously' an ambiguity somewhat similar to the ambiguity of the words 'thought' or 'reflexion.' It is said that the more unconsciously we do a thing, the better we do it. What is really meant is not that we do the thing better, the more unconscious we are of *it*; but that we do it better, the more unconscious we are of certain other things which are *not* it,—e. g. of certain feelings that accompany it, or of other persons looking at us. Or again: we do not do the thing worse for being conscious of *it*, but because we are only *partially* conscious of it, exclusively conscious of some limited step in it or aspect of it.

SECTION III

LANGUAGE AND ITS FUNCTION IN KNOWLEDGE

In the widest sense of the term, language (of which word-language is only one form) is anything by which man expresses or 'means' something. What then is implied in 'meaning'? That which 'means' (σημαίνει) is always a sign (σημεῖον); and a sign is something which stands for something else. If there is to be 'meaning,' one thing must suggest, signify, be related to another thing. Man is a creature for whom things have meanings; his whole world is a world of meanings. No experience or sensation of his, we hear it said, is devoid of meaning. That is, no human experience is isolated, and all human experience is ultimately a kind of language or symbolism.

This fact may be put in opposite ways. Man, on the one hand, is *privileged* to use symbols—a privilege from which spring incalculable consequences, of which literature is only one. He is, on the other hand, *compelled* to use symbols; and this compulsion is a limitation. All that he is conscious of comes to him through certain 'media,' which are not what they mean. All his thinking is 'representative' or 'discursive'; one point leads to another; he gets at everything through something else. While, then, the world to man is a world of language in which nothing is meaningless; and while his experience

is the reading of this world, or the interpretation of this language; he is yet obliged to approach the meaning by interpreting symbols, he never gets to the end of it, and (in a sense) he never sees things as they are.

Language in the narrower sense, then,—language proper—being one kind of symbolism, we have to ask, what are its peculiar properties? A word, as such, is simply a sound or a sight. It is a certain kind of sensation (of sound, colour, shape). To say, therefore, that words have a meaning is to say that certain sounds or sights have come to suggest, firstly, certain other sounds, sights, smells, and the like; and, secondly, certain further images and thoughts, with ever-growing complexity. So far, a word is on the same level with a flag.

Speech has its origin in an instinctive action, but, as soon as it can properly be called speech, it is a conscious action. In varying degrees we exert intelligence and will in using words. Language is thus always being made. We are unfortunately apt to speak as if it were a fixed set of symbols which we have simply to use; but the use of language is really a recreating of it, and every one modifies his native language a little, or creates a little new meaning; great authors create a great deal.

The question sometimes asked, 'Is it possible to think without language?' may mean two very different things. It may mean, (1) 'Is it possible to think without symbols of any kind?' or (2) 'What should we lose if we had not the particular form of symbolism called speech?' The answer to the first question must apparently be, No. To think without symbols would be to think directly, 'intuitively.' It would not be what we call thinking, and would imply that we were always and immediately one with things. All articulate human consciousness is

consciousness of something through something else. If our experience were literally unsymbolic, if it *were* what it *means*, it would not be what we call human consciousness. The second question is a difficult one, but admits of reasonable discussion. We should probably find that people differ more than is supposed in the amount they do with different kinds of symbols. An individual highly organized in a certain direction may be habitually conscious through other symbols than speech, e.g. through music; and, though we may quarrel as to the sense in which we can apply the word 'thought' to music, man would be partially dumb without it. There is also the language of gesture, and the expression of thought in action. Speech is the most widely spread form of symbolism, and has the most important practical consequences; but it does not follow that people who are deficient in the use of it are inarticulate.

The Function of Language in Knowledge.

Language may be conveniently considered as an instrument (1) of expression, (2) of distinction, (3) of communication. For example, we may regard the elementary function of naming from these three points of view.

(1) The phenomenon of *expression* may be observed in a very simple form in an interjection. Physiologically, this, like any other mode of speech, is describable as a reaction on a stimulus. A feeling affects certain nerves, and through them certain muscles, and so issues in a sound. This sound would generally be called the 'expression' of the feeling. The phrase is however misleading, because it separates the feeling from its

expression in sound, and suggests that we first have the feeling and then express it. It would be truer to say that the expression *is* the completed feeling ; for the feeling is not fully felt till it is expressed, and in being expressed it is still felt, but in a different way. What the act of expression does is to fix and distinguish it finally ; it then, and then only, becomes *a* determinate feeling. In the same way the consciousness which we express when we have found the 'right word' is not the same as our consciousness before we found it ; so that it is not strictly correct to call the word the expression of what we meant before we found it. This remains true of more developed forms of expression ; and, following it out, we may say that what is absolutely unexpressed and inexpressible is nothing. We can only describe it potentially and by anticipation. It cannot enter into human life until it has become articulate in *some* way, though not necessarily in words.

What is meant, then, by the contrast between expression and the unexpressed, and by our complaint that language is so imperfectly articulate, and that we mean much more than we can say? These phrases seem all to indicate the fact that thought is progressive. As soon as consciousness is expressed in a word, that word becomes a fixed sign and enters into the web of human experience. As it is used again and again, it acquires new meaning by entering as an element into new contexts. Through this extension, by metaphor, simile, and the like, the original consciousness goes on becoming a consciousness of more : but still the word which expresses this enlarged consciousness has, at any given time, a meaning more or less fixed. When then we say that we cannot find words for our meaning, unless this implies

that our consciousness is too undeveloped to be expressed, it indicates the fact that the words at our command are so fixed in meaning that they would have to be re-created to express our present consciousness, or (to vary the phrase) that this consciousness is potentially more than will go into the known forms of expression. In such a case a word may (very rarely) be invented, or a word may be used in a new sense, or a new combination of words may be found. Our inarticulateness, the inadequacy of words, thus means here simply the progressiveness of thought and of language, and it would be just as right to blame one's thought for it as to blame one's language[1]. (As there are persons who feel more than they can say, so there are others who say more than they feel, and use sham rhetoric and the like. That is, they use words which, if taken in their full sense, mean more than is present in the consciousness of the persons using them. This phenomenon, like the other, arises from the contrast between the fixity of language and the fluctuation of human consciousness.)

We are sometimes told that language becomes less expressive as it becomes more civilized. This is true if it means that what primitive language expresses is very simple, elementary, and obvious, and that therefore primitive language bears its meaning on its face. But the language of a great writer is in reality infinitely more expressive than primitive language; the amount expressed by it is infinitely greater. Compare, for instance, the 'original' meaning of 'spirit' with the meaning of the word as it is used by a religious genius or a great philosopher. The true reason why 'civilized' words

[1] [For, as the preceding sentence implies, the extension of consciousness *is* expressible through a modification of language.]

are inexpressive to us is, generally, that we are unable to realize the fullness of their complex meanings.

It is often said, again, that the highest truths are inexpressible, or perhaps that they are unknowable, and inaccessible to reason, though not to 'faith.' Doubtless to every thoughtful man the consciousness is always present that his utmost reach of thought is limited; and we may say in this sense that there is always a truth beyond us and inexpressible by us, at which we have to try to get. But we are apt to treat this truth as if it *were* expressible, and indeed actually expressed as a truth of 'faith,' and then to contrast it with some other expressed truth. This has often happened in the history of thought. It is dangerous to imply that there is some virtue in being inexpressible; the corollary would be that the less we think definitely, the better. Inarticulateness often comes from indolence: we will not take the trouble to mean what we might.

In so far as words are really expressive, they *are* consciousness in a certain form which we call articulate, and do not need to be contrasted with anything of which they are the expression. We are not definitely conscious till we use the words. But language is always ceasing to be expressive, in various degrees, ceasing, that is, to mean all that it ought to mean. We should try to recover its expressiveness. The most civilized language should be as direct an expression of consciousness as the simplest interjection; but it is only to great writers and speakers that it is so.

(2) A second main function of language is that of *distinction*. To distinguish is to be distinctly conscious. We are apt to suppose that first there is a certain consciousness, and that then we distinguish it. But this

is not so: in the act of distinguishing something we are for the first time distinctly conscious of it. The act of distinguishing has also been represented as the act of arresting the flux of consciousness, or as an act of attention; but, here again, we must not suppose that first there is x, and then we attend to it: x exists for the first time in the act of attention. If we say then that *naming* is distinguishing or attending (though it is of course possible to distinguish without naming), we must beware of thinking that we first have the consciousness and then name it. This is true, indeed, in the sense that any particular act of naming is preceded by un-named or differently named consciousnesses; but the consciousness which is now named is *this* consciousness, which reaches its specific character in the act of being named.

The man who first names a thing may be said, therefore, to give that thing its first existence in the human world. Such first naming is found now in comparatively rare instances; for example, in science, when the new name implies that a new fact has been experienced. But to a certain extent we all make names in learning them. For, when we learn what a thing is called, what is it that we really do? We fix a certain consciousness *in* a certain other consciousness (a sound); and with this the consciousness has passed into a different stage.

How is this stage different? What has happened to the consciousness, the thing, in being named? In the first place we have given it a more permanent position in our experience, and have made it more easily recognizable. Secondly, each time it is recognized it takes a fresh meaning, gets *more* 'distinct.' It stands out more distinctly from a certain background of consciousness, of which it is a modification; as, for instance, the distinct

consciousness of straightness implies a more general consciousness of direction, of which straightness is one distinct form. It is thus, again, more and more compared with and differentiated from other things. That is, thirdly, it gets more 'classified.' All classification is a development of the elementary act of distinction, and every name is the germ of a classification. For all classification is arranging experiences according as they exhibit a certain identity in various ways; and to name is to identify.

As in regard to expression, so in regard to the function of distinction, reproaches are constantly brought against language. On the one hand it is said, 'How poor language is! How very few distinctions it recognizes!' On the other hand it is said, 'How superficial, needless, and merely verbal, are many of the distinctions expressed in language!' As to these complaints we may remark, first, that the poverty of language is *our* fault, not the fault of language. Words are symbols made by us, but we come to look upon them as mysterious agencies, under whose power we are. If a man says he is conscious of a thousand distinctions unrecognized by language, let him prove it by giving names to them. (Not that the number of words in a language or in a book is more than a very partial guide to the wealth or poverty of the nation's or the individual's experience.) Secondly, as to 'verbal distinctions,' it may be observed that these are not *mere* distinctions of words, for the only distinctions of words as such are distinctions of sound or shape. By 'verbal' or by 'mere words' we mean really that the words are being used in partial meanings instead of in their full meanings. One should beware of the antithesis of words and things; it really is a distinction between

the less full and the more full meanings of words. If we all tend to become the 'victims of words,' the corollary is that we should mean something by our words, and know what we mean. We cannot get over the difficulty by blaming language or declining to use it.

(3) Language, thirdly, is an instrument or medium of *communication*. 'Communication' implies two beings, otherwise different, which meet or identify themselves in a certain respect (the 'medium' of communication). Applying this to language, we must observe that the two beings need not be two different people. There is no real difference between language, as a means of communication with self, and language as a means of communication with others. Plato's description of thought as a 'dialogue of the soul with itself' is not fanciful. The act of naming, for example, may be represented as a saying to oneself, 'This shall mean that,' 'I understand that by this,' 'When this recurs, I (being then partly a different I) shall understand myself in using this word, or again shall find myself in what is different.' If there is a mystery in two people understanding one another, there is the same mystery in 'I' being the same at two different times and understanding itself. And, if language is 'conventional' or dependent on a mutual understanding (*κατὰ συνθήκην*), this applies as much to the understanding between the self in one condition and the self in another as to the understanding between myself and another.

Communication or understanding is the consciousness of self being at some point the same in difference, one in two. When two minds understand each other they meet in a certain medium; they feel the same or mean the same; and this is to say, in other words, that they are, so

far, literally one and the same mind. For 'one mind' *means* 'what has one undivided experience.'

Again, the old crux, 'How can I be sure that I mean the same as the other person?' is in principle the same as the difficulty, 'How can I know that anything corresponds to my sensations?' All our sensations are of the nature of words, they are symbolic. I have certain sensations of hardness, shape, and so on. By a complex process of inference I interpret these and judge, 'This is a table.' The table then may be said to 'speak' to me, and I have to *interpret* what it says. In like manner, when a person speaks to me, I have certain sensations of sound, and I infer from these what he means: I have again to *interpret*. The two processes are essentially the same; and I can be no more sure that my sensations really mean a table than that I have interpreted rightly the words of the speaker. If I wish to tell whether I have done the latter, I do something to which I have reason to think that the speaker will respond in a certain way if I have understood him rightly. And I take a like course if I wish to tell whether I have rightly interpreted my sensations to mean a table. The only proof that language really *is* communication, and that there *is* a mutual understanding (*συνθήκη*), is that we act on the belief that there is, and that this belief is justified by the results[1].

Language is, of course, only *one* medium of communication; common interests and common action are other media. Generally language enters into them too, but it does not necessarily do so; to some extent animals and men 'understand' one another and meet. Still, language will always be the typical example of common

[1] [There is much conjectural restoration in this paragraph.]

intelligence; just as the inability to understand a foreign language makes one feel vividly that one is a separate self.

People complain of the inefficiency of language as an instrument of communication, no less than as a means of expression and distinction. It is said that the only use of language is to conceal our thoughts; that nobody was ever convinced by argument; that words separate people instead of uniting them; that the bitterest controversies are about words. But, if words constantly fail to convince, the reason generally is that we do not find the right words. If verbal controversy separates people, the reason generally is that they do not wish to be united. The more honest people are in their desire to get at truth, the less difficulty they find in communication; truth is universal; it is ignorance, error, and prejudice that separate. A received terminology, a common language, is a great help to a common understanding: if the terminology of morals and politics could be as precise as that of the sciences, there would be less difference of opinion on these subjects. It is not the use of language that separates, but its imperfect use. Everything which reveals or expresses to us anything else is indeed necessarily a sign of separation, but it incites us to overcome the separation.

Language and Logic.

It follows from what has been said that language is best described not as a mere expression of thought, but as one mode of thought. We think *in* speaking and writing; that is, we do the things which all thinking proper implies; we express ourselves, we classify things,

we communicate with others. It is only in so far as language *fails* to perform its functions that the antithesis between thought and language arises. The three functions of language are equally vital functions of thought. Thus (1) all thinking proper is the consciousness of the coming of the self to itself; the self *expresses* itself. Language as expressive brings home to us this subjective aspect of knowledge, the fact that, if there is to be knowledge, it must be realized by individual minds. We say what *we* mean; every individual has, in a sense, to make his own language. But (2) all thinking is the consciousness of an objective world, has an objective reference, relates to something which is there when I have ceased to have this particular feeling. This also comes out in language: in naming I mean *something*; I imply that my sensation is a sign of something more than itself. And (3) in communication these two functions come together: two selves are conscious of themselves in community, and conscious of something which is identical, common, and permanent.

It is, then, idle to ask whether logic is concerned with words, or conceptions, or things, if these alternatives are taken strictly. It is concerned with words, for it is concerned with *expressed* consciousness or experience; with conceptions, for it is concerned with expressed *consciousness*; with things, for it is concerned with expressed consciousness of *truth*. But there is a sense in which logic may be truly said to have to do with words *par excellence*. It considers the expression of truth in its simplest modes, not those complex expressions of it which are furnished by the particular sciences. It has to do with a very small part of things or reality; and, if we take 'words' to signify this, logic has to do with

words. Only this does not mean that it has to do with words as rhetoric or grammar has to do with them. And, again, we may say that logic is concerned with conceptions, so long as we mean that it is concerned with consciousness, or things, *less* fully realized, as contrasted with consciousness, or things, *more* fully realized; and so long as we do not oppose conceptions to supposed things 'outside the mind.' But, again, it is not concerned with conceptions as psychology is concerned with them; it deals only with such consciousness as results in knowledge.

From this point of view we may glance at the question, How far does logic, as compared with grammar, take account of language? The logician considers language as a mental activity contributing to *knowledge*: and, if he classifies the forms of language, the ground of his classification will be the ways in which language fulfils this function. For example, we may ask, What are the most elementary meanings which lie at the basis of knowledge? or, What are the most elementary ways in which the world must be expressed if it is to be known? Aristotle's Categories, for instance, are an attempt to answer this question. But it will not matter to the logician if he finds no *consistent* forms of words corresponding to his list of elementary meanings. Thus (*a*) the substantival form in grammar corresponds to the logical category of substance to some extent, but only to some extent; and to the logician it is indifferent whether substance is expressed as a substantive or as an adjective, while to the grammarian the formal distinctions of words are of much greater importance. The two sciences have different interests, and the logician must guard against being too much affected by grammatical

associations. Again, (*b*) if there is to be knowledge, there must be the consciousness of generality and of individuality; the consciousness that a thing is what it is and nothing else, and the consciousness that it is related to, and has something in common with, other things. But these distinctions are expressed grammatically in different ways in different languages, and even in one and the same language; and to the logician such variations are not a matter of consequence. Again, (*c*) all definite consciousness is positive and negative; every act of positing something implies an act of exclusion. And language, as an instrument of thought, must express this. But it matters little to the logician what particular names in a language are to be called positive, or negative, or privative. Again, (*d*) there is no thinking without abstraction; to think anything we must hold it apart from other things. On the other hand, the more fully we think about anything, the more things do we hold together in thought, the more concrete does our thought become. Practically, all thought is both abstract and concrete; and, when we call it one or the other, we are looking at one or the other of its aspects. It is necessary that language should express this distinction, and it is abundantly expressed; but different languages and writers express it differently, and these variations again have little interest for logic. Once more, (*e*) all thinking is judgment, more or less explicit; that is, it implies two elements which are partially identified and asserted to be one. Language expresses this fact in various ways; but the subject of the sentence to the grammarian is not necessarily the subject of the judgment to the logician. The logician cannot ignore the linguistic expression of judgment; but the particular forms of expression which a given lan-

guage adopts are indifferent to him, and he must guard against the confusion which their influence may introduce into logic. When he classifies forms of judgment, as also when he classifies names, he has to remember that he is concerned with the functions of *thought.*

SECTION IV

CONCEPTS AS THE PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE

LOGIC being a theoretical consideration of knowledge, the question arises, What is the best order or method in which to set forth the various functions of which knowledge is the result? According to the common arrangement of text-books the theory of conception is taken first, then that of judgment, and thirdly that of reasoning. This arrangement is ultimately based on the idea that the best and most natural method of scientific exposition is to begin with the simple and to advance to the complex; a method which shows how complex results can be resolved into, and reconstructed out of, certain ultimate unanalyzable elements.

With regard to this idea, it is essential that we should understand how we are to regard the relation of the more simple to the more complex. Is the complex formed by the mere juxtaposition, addition, composition of the simple; or is it a development? The first of these views is often adopted, but, if we consider concrete instances, we shall see that no complex is produced by the mere juxtaposition of simples, but that the simple always assumes a new character or quality in the complex. For example, the letters of the alphabet, which may be considered the elements of language (στοιχεῖα), enter into the complexes called syllables, words, sentences, and so on.

But as soon as *A* has entered into the syllable *AB* it is no longer the same *A* as before, for its function has changed; and, if you resolve the syllable *AB* into mere *A* and mere *B*, it is no longer the syllable. So, again, a word is not the same thing out of a sentence and in a sentence; a tone is not the same thing by itself, and in a phrase, and in a melody; a straight line has one character by itself, and another in a triangle, and another in a square; and, to take a more important example, the family is one thing when it is the component of a tribe, and another when it is the component of a modern European state. If this were not so, if the simple element did not thus assume a new character in the complex, there would be no interest in tracing its development; it would suffice to know the simple and then to say, All complexes are this simple repeated so many times. Conversely, as the simple is not merely repeated, but gets qualified in becoming complex, so the complex is not merely *broken up* by analysis into the simple, but is found to be *contained in* the simple in a less developed form. Only if this is so, is there any possibility of explaining the complex by analysis, or any interest in trying to do so. The continuity thus implied in development may be expressed by saying that the simpler is the more complex potentially. No doubt this statement may be made to appear ridiculous. It may be translated, for example, into the statement that the letters of the alphabet are potentially all that has ever been written; and to say even that man is potentially a state may sound absurd. Yet it is the case that we cannot evolve society out of man without implying that man contains the possibility of society, and is, so to say, organized for it; and it is no less correct to define a letter as a possible

element in a word than to define a word as a compound of letters.

In this sense, then, the *principia* or ἀρχαί to which any science goes back are also the στοιχεῖα or elements of its subject-matter, the raw material into which the fabric can be resolved. Geometrical science, for example, may be thus regarded as a construction built up out of certain ultimate elements, such as points, lines, and the like. It was in this way that Aristotle looked at science; and hence also he called his account of the logic of science 'analytics.' He thought, that is, that the logic of science consisted in showing the elements out of which it is constructed. In the same way now we may hear it said that the ideal of scientific explanation is to find the fewest laws from which some part of the universe may be explained. Sometimes, again, it is said that all science depends upon its definitions; that is, upon statements regarding the elements of its subject-matter; and, although it is, of course, quite untrue that anyone who understood the definitions could forthwith reconstruct the whole science, it is quite true in another sense that science, so far as it is complete and systematic, depends upon its definitions. Any discussion, for example, about its more complex statements depends upon agreement as to its elements, and a refusal to accept the definitions of these elements, e.g. the definition of a line, is fatal to the discussion of the more complex constructions into which these elements enter.

If this idea of analysis, then, is applied to knowledge, does it lead us to the traditional arrangement of conception, judgment, and reasoning? Are concepts, that is, the *principia* of the structure of knowledge?

This structure is a complex whole, ever growing and

thus re-constituting itself. It may be described as a mind holding together certain facts, or as a certain coherent experience; and analysis should show what are the simplest elements of which this experience is the development. So that the question of the 'principles' of knowledge may be put indifferently in either of the forms, (*a*) What are the most elementary facts which are capable of growing into scientific facts? or, (*b*) What are the most elementary experiences which can become scientific experiences?

Now the whole body of knowledge, or the sum of reasoned truth, is obviously divided into parts. If we take any one of these parts, such as we call a special science, this again may be resolved into component parts bearing a necessary relation to one another. This process may be continued until we come finally to some simplest piece of reasoning or coherent fact. But we can go further; we can analyze this syllogism into judgments (though these, we must remember, are not the same in the syllogism as they are out of it). A judgment, again, is a synthesis of two elements, partly distinct; and these elements are called, variously, concepts or ideas. Thus the 'principles' or elements of the given division of knowledge would seem to be certain concepts; and these, as expressed in definitions, would be the ἀρχαί of that science. These concepts, naturally, would be concepts of a special subject-matter; but, neglecting the particular properties of that subject-matter, we can go on to ask for something still more simple, the simplest elements into which the knowable world can be analyzed, or the most elementary concepts which enter into *all* knowledge, and of which all knowledge is the development.

If we represent conception thus as the simplest act of

thought, it is most important to remember (in accordance with what we have seen already) that all thought is continuous, that the properties of the concept will be such as fit it to be a factor, and that it must be regarded as judgment and reasoning in germ. Because this has not been remembered, many logicians protest against concepts being taken as the elements of thought, and point out that all concepts are implicit judgments. And this is perfectly true. We talk of ideas or conceptions as if they were isolated things, occasionally brought into action and relation; but if we attend to any conception in our minds we are at once aware that it is no such quiescent and self-contained thing. It is no more so than a word in a book. On the contrary, every one of my ideas is in a context which it colours and by which it is coloured. It is also true that, if we go back to the most elementary act of thought, we come to something which can be called indifferently an act of conception or an act of judgment; and thus we must undoubtedly say that all thinking is judging. But it is none the less true that we can treat any given piece of thought as a self-contained whole, and in this sense can speak of the concepts of identity, being, number, figure, life, virtue, humanity. We assume, and must assume, that in each of these cases there is a determinate nature with certain definite characters of its own. We know, indeed, that each of these natures has its reality in interaction with others which infinitely modify it; any spatial fact is also numberless other things; humanity, as we experience it, is never simply what we define as humanity. None of them is really determinate, complete, and self-contained; each is progressive and expansive, and is continually being modified; and therefore the statements we make about them are made with

a reservation. Still the truth, as so far ascertained, can be, and, for convenience, must be, treated as though it were complete and isolated; and in this sense we may rightly speak of the concepts of space or of humanity, so long as we remember that each of them is not really disconnected or complete, and also that each of them is the result of innumerable judgments that have preceded it.

SECTION V

FORMAL LOGIC AS THE SCIENCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF KNOWLEDGE

We have seen in what sense knowledge may be regarded as a structure built up out of elements or 'principles'; and also in what sense concepts may be regarded as the elements of each special science, and again of knowledge as such. Dismissing now the special concepts of special sciences, and turning to inquire into the principles, or simplest elements, of all knowledge, we may state the question regarding these principles in various ways. Thus, first, since all knowledge is knowledge of something, of an object, we may ask, What is an *object* as such, in the simplest possible sense of the word? Or again: all knowledge is of being; particular sciences are knowledge of particular forms of being; knowledge as such has to do with being as such; what then is the simplest form of *being*? Or, once more, from the subjective side, since all knowledge is an act of thought, what is thinking as such? what are the most elementary laws of *thought*, as distinguished, for example, from the special laws of spatial thought or economic thought? The answers to these questions should give us something that is involved in *all* objects and *all* thought, that type of objectivity and of thinking which will be the same everywhere. And these questions will be equivalent to the question, What is a concept as such? if we bear in mind that this is

to mean for us, What is the simplest form of experience *regarded as* a self-contained, independent unity?

To our question many answers have been given. (*a*) Greek philosophy answers, Everything is a one in many; this is the simplest and most abstract formulation of being; whatever else being may involve, it involves at least this. (*b*) It is much the same when a modern philosopher answers, The most elementary consciousness which can possibly become knowledge is a consciousness of identity in difference or of differentiated identity. It is difficult to realize a consciousness so abstract, but a concrete example may help us. If we take an act of attention, we shall agree that it involves a double consciousness, a consciousness of having changed from something to something. The moment I am conscious of *A* I am conscious of it as a change from *B*, my previous consciousness (or unconsciousness, for it makes no difference to the point); *B* has become *A*, or rather *BA*; or I am conscious of *A* as the same as *B* with a difference. Definite consciousness is always a consciousness of change; an absolutely uniform consciousness would be no consciousness; all consciousness is consciousness of differentiated identity, or of a many in one. (*c*) Another way of formulating the activity of thought is to say that all thought implies synthesis. In the most elementary consciousness there is a holding together of two things at least—of myself as I was then, and myself as I am now. It is evident that these three answers to our question are merely different ways of stating the same fact. And it is worth while to observe that a famous conclusion from the fact thus variously stated is the principle that everything is what it is in and through its difference from another; that not-being or 'otherness' (Plato's *Sophist*) is the

inseparable concomitant of being; that 'omnis determinatio est negatio,' or everything is determined by the exclusion of something else (Spinoza); that therefore everything is and is not at the same moment.

These considerations will help us to see the true significance of *Formal Logic*, and of those 'laws of thought' of which it speaks. Formal logic, as a science, has for its subject-matter being (or consciousness) where it is at its minimum. It takes account of things simply in so far as we can predicate of them 'being' and 'not-being,' 'all' and 'some.' Its question is: Suppose I know no more than that a thing is what it is and not something else, and that 'all' is more than 'some,' what can I infer from this knowledge? Formal logic is therefore the most abstract of all sciences; it is more abstract even than arithmetic, for arithmetic considers also the 'countability' of things, while geometry goes further still.

In the same way, the laws of thought considered in formal logic are the most abstract laws possible: they are the ways in which the mind must act if it is to think at all. For instance, the law of Identity means that, if I am to be definitely conscious of anything, I must at least be able to identify, to say that A is A. The law of Contradiction, which is only the other side of this law, means that human experience would fall to the ground, unless we could say, If A is A, A is not not-A. The law of Excluded Middle, which says that, if I have thought of the world simply as A and not-A, everything I am conscious of is one or the other, is not a third law, but a corollary of these. By using the word 'laws' we do not imply that they are something externally imposed on the mind; but we imply that these are the ways in which the mind acts, and must act, if it is to be a mind.

These laws are usually called by formal logicians laws of *pure* thought; but the expression is objectionable, for it suggests the false idea that there is some difference of kind between 'pure' thought and thought as it enters, for example, into chemistry. In reality, 'pure' thought differs from other thinking in being the most *elementary* thinking possible, and it differs in no other way; *all* thinking is some kind of identification of differences or differentiation of identities. It is quite true that the results of this elementary thinking have extreme certitude, and the reason is that elementary thinking is extremely simple, while every fresh condition brings a fresh possibility of error; the reason is *not* that the elementary thinking is 'pure,' while other thinking involves an appeal to 'experience.' It is sometimes said that, as soon as a proposition is set forth which involves nothing but the laws of Identity and Contradiction, its truth is self-evident and does not depend on 'experience,' by which is meant something outside the particular proposition. But *every* truth, so far as it is seen to be true, is so far self-evident; and in another sense of 'experience,' the simplest truths imply an appeal to experience just as much as any others. A man who follows the reasoning of Euclid reasons, in one sense, without appealing to experience; but he is, all the time, 'experiencing' a certain thing called space, and each new step in the reasoning is a new experience of space. The experience of space is so simple and universal, and we get it so easily, that we are apt to speak as if it were different from other kinds of experience, and as if the truths of geometry had some different ground of belief from other truths. But, while the truths of geometry are not derived from any *other* experience than that of space, they

express the experience of space; and this differs from certain other kinds of experience merely in its simplicity.

In the same way the laws of Identity and Contradiction express an experience, though an experience of a still more simple kind; and they are truths of experience just as much as are the truths of chemistry. Certainly they are not 'derived from experience' in the sense of being derived from some *other* experience; for to say that is to say something quite unmeaning, since without experience of identity and difference there is no experience at all. To say, as some formal logicians do, that the results of formal logic involve no appeal to experience is either false or tautologous [1].

The subject-matter of formal logic, then, is experience, or the nature of things, at its minimum. Its thinking, therefore, is in the highest degree abstract, and for this reason formal logic is well fitted to be a mental gymnastic, and to hold a place like that of algebra in education. No doubt the text-books of formal logic are apt to speak of it as though it were 'mere' thinking and not connected with things at all; but it is really a statement of what is most elementary in objects, and therefore the laws of thought are, so far, also laws of things.

[1] [On experience, see Note A.]

SECTION VI

THE CONCEPT AS UNIVERSAL, PARTICULAR, INDIVIDUAL

WE have seen that the analysis of knowledge brings us, if we consider the matter on the 'objective' side, to being as such, and that this involves identity and difference; and, again, that if we consider knowledge on the 'subjective' side we reach an activity of thought which consists in identifying and distinguishing. In connexion with this account of the simplest experience, or of conception as such, we may enquire into the meaning of the terms universal, particular, and individual.

The simplest conception we can possibly form may be described by the word 'something.' We should identify it by calling it 'this.' In identifying it thus we *ipso facto* distinguish it from 'that'; it is 'this not that.' The conception 'this not that' further implies something in which both 'this' and 'that' partake, the medium in which they both are and of which they are different forms.

Here we have the germs of universal, particular, and individual. The universal is the medium or common nature in which both 'this' and 'that' partake, and of which they are distinct forms. 'This' is a particular; it is this medium in a *partial* form; partial, because it excludes 'that,' which is another partial form of the common element. Thirdly, if we wish to know fully what 'this' is, we can only do so by discovering all

its differences from, and resemblances to, 'that': here we should have the individuality of 'this.'

Such seems to be the simplest and truest meaning of the three words. Every concept, as a one of (or in) many, is universal, particular, and individual. For example, take the concept of triangle. It is universal[1], for it may assume a number of different forms (equilateral, isosceles, &c.), or is capable of further specification. It is particular, for it is a specific form of something more general (figure) and excludes *other* specific forms of it. It is individual, for it is this unique form of figure regarded as complete and self-contained, its individuality being its whole nature, or what would be described in a true definition of it. Thus the same thing is at once universal, particular, and individual. Every concept admits of further specification, and therefore is universal; every concept is the specification of something more general, and therefore is particular; every concept is exactly what it is, and therefore is individual. These properties do not exclude each other, but each implies the others.

Universal and Particular.

We may now consider certain important ways in which the relations of the universal and particular have been regarded.

1. The universal, or the concept as universal, has been regarded as the capability or *potentiality* of assuming certain particular forms. Thus Aristotle sometimes represents the universal as the potentiality or ὕλη of its particulars, the γένος as the 'matter' of the species. This

[1] 'The universal triangle,' or, better, 'the triangle regarded universally,' is not the same as 'the universal *of* triangle.' 'The universal of triangle' is figure, just as triangle is 'the universal of' isosceles triangle.

expresses the important truth that a universal is the universal *of* some particular, and a particular the particular *of* some universal, i.e. that there must be a real continuity between the two. Thus a red triangle may be offered as an instance of a particular triangle, but in strictness it is not a particular *triangle*; for redness is not a differentiation of triangularity, but of something else. The truth expressed in this phrase of Aristotle's is of special importance in regard to classification.

2. The universal has been called the κοινόν of the particulars, that which is *common* to them all and enters into them all. This phrase suggests the idea that the universal is arrived at by leaving out the particularity of the particulars; and with this idea is connected the doctrine that universal conceptions are obtained by abstraction. There is in this both truth and untruth. In what sense is it true that we leave out the particularities in order to arrive at the universal? If we take our former instance, particular triangles will be equilateral, isosceles, scalene triangles. Now, in order to arrive at the concept of triangle as such, we cannot absolutely *leave out* the particular properties of equilateral, isosceles, and scalene triangles; for if we did we should be left not with triangularity, but with nothing at all; the equilaterality of an equilateral triangle is inseparable from its triangularity. But we can attend exclusively to the fact of triangularity, the fact of space contained in three straight lines; a fact which may exist under various conditions (equilateral, &c.), and which never exists except under certain conditions. To this we can attend, and this we can retain as something 'common' to all particular triangles. Every triangle is particular; but triangularity, the 'common' or universal,

is not a mere abstraction, it is something which exists in all particulars. Like 'our common humanity' it is that in which all its particulars meet; they are absolutely inseparable from it, and it from them.

3. The universal is said to express what is *essential* in the particulars. This again may be taken in a true sense or in a false. Mill protests against an 'exploded realism' which insists on certain 'essences' as the sole matter of importance, and opposes to them as unessential all the characteristic properties of things. And, if this doctrine was ever really held, Mill's protest would certainly be right. But, when the universal is said to be or to express the essential, what is regarded as unessential is that which is *irrelevant*, e.g. the redness of a triangle. So again with 'our common humanity': to realize this, one must disregard many things usually associated with humanity. For example, in discussions about slavery, it is rightly urged that it does not matter whether a man is black or white, but that the essential thing is, perhaps, the possession of reason, or the capacity of forming a society. This essence is the universal, compared with which certain differences are irrelevant: and, although people will always differ more or less as to what *is* essential and what irrelevant, the distinction itself is a sound one. It is a misunderstanding of it that leads to that idea of an 'essence' from which everything really characteristic is omitted.

4. The universal is said to *contain* or *include* its particulars. This, of course, is a spatial metaphor, and we always have to guard against the influence of spatial associations. But the metaphor helps some minds to realize the truth, and it is convenient as bringing out the fact that particulars, while excluding one another, also

make up, or are included in, one whole. To say, for example, that humanity includes all men may help one to realize the truth that, though men exclude one another, they still form a unity.

This formula is connected with that which represents the universal as the *whole*, of which the particulars are *parts*. 'Universal' is καθ' ὅλου, that which is true of something as a whole. Τὸ καθ' ὅλου is 'universum,' a thing taken in its totality. And so 'particular' is τὸ κατὰ μέρος or ἐν μέρει, a thing taken in a partial sense. The whole is more than the part; and so the universal (e.g. triangularity, or triangle as universal) is said to be more, or to have more in it, than the particular (e.g. isosceles triangle).

This is so, or is not so, according as you understand 'triangle' and 'isosceles triangle.' If you mean by 'triangle' simply and solely the conception of a space included in three straight lines, clearly there is less in 'triangle' than in 'isosceles triangle,' and every particularity assumed by 'triangle' adds something to its concreteness. But, if you mean by 'triangle' the conception, or holding together in the mind, of all the possibilities implied in a space included in three straight lines, there is more in 'triangle' than in 'isosceles triangle,' for the latter is 'triangle' under limitations, or in a partial sense. This is what Aristotle meant by ἐν μέρει; and if we guard against quantitative associations this is an instructive point of view.

To repeat, any whole may be regarded either in its full meaning as containing all its parts, or as a sort of outline waiting to be filled up. In the latter sense we speak of 'triangle' as a universal containing less than any of its particulars (an 'abstract universal'). So, again,

any part of a whole may be regarded either as implying all the other parts, and therefore implying, ultimately, the whole; or, in an abstract way, as excluding the other parts. In the latter sense a particular triangle is only part of the whole 'triangle,' or is triangle under limitations.

General Concepts and Generalization.

From the point of view we have taken, there would seem to be no reason for talking of universal or general concepts as if they were a separate class, and of particular and individual concepts as if they were two other separate classes. *Every* concept is general, particular, and individual. Every concept is general because it may apply to other cases besides the one you happen to have in mind.

Still, 'general concepts' are constantly spoken of, in implied contrast with concepts that are not general. And, further, 'general' and 'generality' are often used in a bad sense, as when it is said, 'That is a mere generality,' or 'So and so deals in vague generalities.' This depreciatory remark cannot mean merely that the person says what is true in a great variety of circumstances, and that his concept is very general in this sense. It means that he realizes the concept only to a small extent, that he does not realize nearly all of the circumstances to which it applies, but lumps together under it things which are quite distinct; that he has not thought *out* the meaning of the concept.

A concept being the result of an act or acts of thought, the generality of a concept will be simply that in it which is due to the act of generalization. To generalize means, in the simplest sense, to see that *A* is true in other

cases than the present case, in *B*, *C*, and *D*. To put it technically, all generalization is, ultimately, seeing a certain identity running through certain differences; and a concept is general in so far as it is the result of this generalization. A good generalizer is one who sees identities under differences which disguise them from most people; he is Plato's συνοπτικός. But we may generalize badly. We may see, for instance, that *A* holds good in *B*, *C*, *D*, but may overlook important differences in *B*, *C*, *D*. In such a case our generalization will be rash; though true as far as it goes, it will be false because, from the differences being overlooked, identities will be inferred where they do not exist. But it is impossible to think at all without generalizing; merely to judge 'this is a case of that' is to generalize; and to generalize is to use a general concept, which is capable of particular varieties.

Individual and Individuality.

'Individuum' is the translation of ἄτομον, 'indivisible,' a word habitually used in logic by Aristotle to express a certain point of view. Any generic nature—anything considered universally—may be regarded as admitting of particularization. This process of differentiating a universal was represented by Plato and Aristotle as a dividing or cutting up (τέμνειν), so that Plato in the *Phaedrus* compares the differentiation of a universal to the organization of a physical body, and a bad reasoner to an unskilful cook who divides the body across the joints. Supposing the process to be carried as far as it can be in a given direction, something will be reached which may be called τὸ ἄτομον, that which admits of no

further division; that which is not the possibility of several; that of which there is only one.

Where this point is reached—*where* in the process something is arrived at which, for the purpose in question, is fully differentiated and therefore individual, depends upon the purpose in question; and therefore the word individual is extremely ambiguous. Thus the universal 'figure' may be differentiated into rectilinear and curvilinear, and the triangle, as the simplest form of rectilinear figure, may be taken as individual. But this individual again for another purpose may be divided into equilateral, isosceles, and scalene. That is, you may 'individualize' any concept in various degrees. All we can say in the abstract is that a concept is individual when it is, or is regarded as being, incapable of further differentiation, or as the complete differentiation (for the purpose in question) of a certain universal.

Thus, if we start with the idea of the universal as that which contains its differences merely implicitly, any individual of this abstract universal will contain more than it, and that which is most individual in the series will be the fully developed or realized universal. In this sense we often use 'individuality.' The 'individuality' of a thing is that which makes it what it is, its complete nature, that which you would state if you were able to define it. A 'great individuality' is a person in whom the universal humanity has reached a very high degree of development or differentiation; one who concentrates in himself a great deal of human nature; a person therefore of many sides, who is very 'representative' and touches others at innumerable points.

On the other hand the word 'individual' has also associations of the very opposite kind. If we look at the

universal as a whole formed by the composition of elements, and if we break it up into these elements, we arrive at last at elements incapable of further division, or ἄτομα. These ultimate atoms are, in this sense, individuals; but, instead of being the universal as most fully qualified, *these* individuals contain the minimum of qualification or character. The individuality of an 'atom' is the least individuality we can speak of. And so we say of a person who has no individuality, 'he is a mere atom'; and 'a mere individual' is one whose personality is supposed to be reduced to the fact that he is just one in a crowd, only a unit, which is next to being a cipher.

Thus the word 'individual' is applied at opposite poles, and signifies both the greatest and the least amount of character or 'individuality.' The reason of this, and of the confusion that arises from it, is that the process of differentiating or individualizing may be conducted to any point we like, and may be considered to stop at any point we like. Different people individualize up to different stages, and the associations we connect with the word individual depend on the point at which the process is generally understood to stop. It *may* stop at the first differentiation of the simplest universal: 'something' becomes 'this,' and attains a little individuality, the individuality of 'this' consisting in being 'not that.' Advance a step and localize 'this' in space, and it becomes 'this here'; it is somewhat more individualized, for it is 'not that there.' To express this low degree of individuality we might coin an Aristotelian formula τόδε τί που καὶ νῦν; and, again, the individuality implied by our English phrase 'mere individual' is the smallest amount that will serve to distinguish one from another.

Still this *may* be considered an individuality; that is, we *may* stop the process of individualization at this point.

Just as the process may be stopped at various points, so it may be conducted on various principles; and thus again the individuality of an object will be said by different people to consist in different things. Human nature, for example, is so complicated that perhaps no two persons would exactly agree as to that in which the individuality of man consists. Still more would two of us differ about the individuality of some particular man whom we both happened to know, because each of us would consider a different thing in the man the most important and interesting thing about him. And in the same way 'the individual' in logic books has various senses, according as various properties are regarded as constituting individuality.

We may bring out still further in the following way the opposite senses which attach to the words 'individual' and 'individuality.' If we insist on asking the question, What is the true individuality of a thing? we must answer, All that the generic nature in question has in it to become in that particular form. The true individuality of man is everything of which human nature is capable. But no man, no 'individual,' is, in this sense of the word, truly individual. 'Individual' accordingly comes to be used in the sense of 'particular.' In calling a man 'individual' we imply his limitations, and think as much of what he excludes as of what he includes. 'Individualism' again has come to be the regular word to designate the attitude of men in their mutual exclusiveness; an 'individualistic' theory is one which regards men as mutually exclusive atoms, and endeavours to explain society by showing it to result from a combination of such atoms.

No antithesis is more common than that between the community and the individual. Yet if it is true that the community is nothing but a collection of individuals, and that the individual is merely that which goes to make up a community, it seems strange that the antithesis should be able to arise, and that controversies should be waged regarding the respective rights of the two. The main reason is that, as we have seen, different people 'individualize' up to such different stages and on such different principles. A person who upholds the 'rights of the individual' probably does not mean the rights which attach to the merest individuality possible to man, but the rights of a considerably differentiated human being; and a person who speaks of the community does not mean a collection or whole in the abstract, but a certain body of persons representing definite interests. There is no such thing as an abstract individual; a person with the minimum of qualification must mean a person who has *some* standing-ground common to himself and others. And a community, again, is not a community unless it is a one in many, something in which there is a *commune quid*. So long as the controversy is debated in the abstract, it is a mere beating of the air. It ought always to be made concrete. That is, we ought always to ask what is meant by the 'individual' spoken of, what amount of individuality he is taken to possess; and what is the particular *commune quid* we mean when we talk of the community. It is possible then to compare this *commune quid* with the rights in question, and to ask whether it is of such value that it ought, or ought not, to be paramount.

To sum up: individuality, as such, is any determinate character which any generic nature has assumed, this

character being the point at which you choose to stop in the process of differentiation. Hence, in logic, individuality may be, and has been, used in two chief ways, to express either (1) the *minimum* of differentiation, what is just enough to distinguish one from another; or (2) the *maximum* of qualification, the most differentiated nature, what is contained in the full definition of a thing, the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, which is also the οὐσία of a thing[1].

[1] [Compare the remarks entitled 'Individuality' in the *Miscellaneous Papers*.]

SECTION VII

CONCEPTION AND PERCEPTION, MEDIATE AND IMMEDIATE APPREHENSION

So far we have used 'concept' to mean any definite matter of consciousness; any consciousness of 'this' as a form of 'that,' and as, therefore, partly the same as 'that.' But the terms 'conception,' 'concept,' 'conceive,' are also used in specific senses and in contrast with other terms. Before we proceed with our discussion of conception in its wider meaning, it will be well to glance at some of these antitheses.

Concept and Percept.

What is the point of the distinction often made between conception and perception? Every act of perception is really also an act of conception, in the sense we have hitherto given to the latter word, for a perception is, a holding together in the mind. But, if we wish to assign the two words to different modes of 'holding together,' the name *perception* may be given to any distinct consciousness of objects which involves the action of one or more of the senses, whereas *conception* would stand for that distinct consciousness of objects which excludes, or at least does not imply, any direct action of the senses. Thus, in the case of any object, part of the nature of which is to be sensible, we may talk of perception and conception as distinct. The perception of a tree, for example,

will be our consciousness of the tree when we are actually in its presence and see it. The conception of it will be our consciousness of the tree when we go away and think of it.

This conception may be complete or incomplete in various degrees. It is possible that a person, in thinking of a tree, might realize its sensible qualities as vividly as in actually looking at it; and in that case there would be no assignable or 'practical' difference between the conception and the perception of the tree. Doubtless in most cases where we are said to think of a thing we leave out elements which are present in perception. (We are of course aware of this; if we are not aware of it, we are the victims of illusion.) Still a *full* conception of a thing means realizing the *whole* thing; and as, in the case of the tree, reflexion shows that the experience of it implies visibility, tangibility, and the like, a reflecting person includes in his conception of the tree the fact that under certain conditions he would see it and touch it. In the same way a man with unusual powers of conception is one who has a great power of realizing what he would experience under certain circumstances, while most of us have to refresh our conceptions constantly. Thus there is no absolute line between perception and conception. A full conception of a perceptible thing, in the sense of a thoroughly definite consciousness of it, would imply its perceptibility, as well as a great deal besides.

This truth is obscured by the meaning often given to conception. Many people understand by the word a partial and faded idea of a thing, and this is what they contrast with perception. In the same way we find it stated that thoughts or conceptions are reproduced sensations; sensations which have lost their original fresh-

ness and force[1], but have been retained by memory, reproduced by imagination, recombined by thought. There is obviously some truth in this account, but it is not an adequate or instructive account; for to call conception a fainter or less clear reproduction of sensation or perception is to omit its differentia. It would be more instructive to say that an experience becomes more a conception, and less a mere perception, the wider, the more complex, and the more connected it becomes. In conception perceptions are not eliminated, but are carried on into ever-widening contexts. Conception, one may say, *is* perception connected with other perceptions. If this were not so, in passing from perception to conception we should be like a man who, in order to understand a

[1] [Some remarks were made at this point on the idea that a conception has less force or intensity than a sensation or sense-perception. These remarks seem to be rather of the nature of a note made in passing; but their drift would appear to be somewhat as follows :—There is no doubt of the fact that what I feel (my *πάθος*) when I see or hear something is often much more intense than what I feel when I realize an abstract truth. But we must not confuse intensity of sensitive affection with degree of reality or truth. Our impressibility is no gauge of truth (though doubtless it is important as far as possible to make ourselves impressionable by the truest truth). The man who sees an illuminated turnip and takes it for a ghost may die of fright; and that proves the intensity of his *πάθος*, but it does not prove the truth of his perception. We might, indeed, if we chose, speak of an intensity of thought, conception, knowledge, just as we do of an intensity of feeling; and there is this analogy between them, that the intensity in either case can only be measured by that which, in the one case, it enables a man to do, and in the other case moves him to do. But then the intensity of feeling and the intensity of thought may be in inverse ratio. A person may, and often does, realize a truth intensely without feeling at all intensely; and, though a relatively simple sensation may move intensely at the moment, its intensity with respect to truth or knowledge is trifling; i. e. the knowledge got through it would enable a man to do extremely little. Observe also that intensity of conviction is not intensity of thought nor any test of truth; a madman's conviction may be most intense.]

chapter, forgets all the particular ideas in it. And no doubt what are often called our 'general conceptions' are very much of the nature of that general meaning of a book which we say we retain, though we remember hardly any of the details. This general meaning is only a fragment of the meaning of the book, and to complete it we should have to retraverse the details. In like manner our 'general conceptions,' so called, are but fragmentary and sketchy pieces of experience, which have to be revivified by recourse to sensation. If we choose (as many writers do) to confine the word 'conception' to such faded fragments, there is no objection to this use. In that case, however, we must remember that the word is not equivalent to 'conception' in the sense we attach to it in these lectures, as the holding together of many particulars of experience.

(The antithesis of conception and perception, as generally used, corresponds to some extent with the wider antithesis of *theory* and *fact*, already touched on in an earlier lecture. In one sense there can be no antithesis of theory and fact. If a theory is the expression of any truth, it corresponds to some fact; and there is no fact which does not imply a theory, simple or complicated. In a certain sense, however, 'mere theory' and 'mere fact,' a 'mere theorist' and a 'mere empiricist,' may be contrasted.

A 'mere theory' is never the expression of a nonentity. The wildest theories express *some* facts, or they would not do the mischief they do. When any one speaks of a mere theory he will always be found to mean a partial statement of something which he knows more fully, or thinks capable of being known and treated more fully. It is a conception of a partial fact, awaiting further

experience, like a hypothesis, which also is never absolutely baseless.

A 'mere empiricist,' again, is never a person without *any* theory; every one must connect his facts a little. A mere empiricist is a man who, comparatively, sees little connexion between the facts he knows. His facts, one may say, are like isolated words, which have little meaning; and he is like a man who knows by heart a great many words out of a dictionary, but who cannot make a sentence. A 'mere fact' then is one in which you assume there is more meaning, more 'conception,' than is seen in it by the person to whom it is a mere fact.

A common way of attempting to express the difference between theory and fact is to say that a theory only exists in somebody's mind. The meaning intended is that facts are true independently of the whims and fancies of this or that person; but the expression is most unfortunate, since it suggests that a fact is a fact because it exists in nobody's mind. In that case it would be a fact for nobody. As a thing becomes more true, it does not withdraw itself from people's minds; rather, the more it becomes an essential and inseparable part of people's minds, the more true it is. Between theory and fact one can make no distinction other than that of less and greater connectedness and completeness.)

Intuition and Conception. Immediate and Mediate. Presentative and Representative.

These are other forms of the antithesis which we have been considering. 'Intuition' means literally the act of looking at something. The word is used in two important ways in philosophy. It is used (*a*) as the equivalent of

Anschauung, as employed by Kant; and in this sense it ought to mean a consciousness of which the form is either spatial or temporal or both, as contrasted with any consciousness of which the form is neither spatial nor temporal. Though 'intuition' is the more literal translation of *Anschauung*, the meaning of the latter term is, on the whole, better rendered by 'perception.' (*b*) More generally, 'intuition' is used to signify a direct or immediate apprehension. To see intuitively that a thing is true does not, indeed, mean—as it is sometimes supposed to do—that I see it instantaneously or by a mere glance of the mind; but it means that I see its truth without being able to give any reason for it, or that my perception is 'immediate.' Let us consider more fully what 'immediate' and 'mediate' can signify.

An immediate consciousness would be one that is not held through the medium of some other consciousness. If I think A is A because it is B, B is a medium between my mind and A: I get at A through B. Any reason for a truth is a medium, a μέσον, between something and something else; and, the more media are implied in a consciousness, the more mediate is it.

Can any perception or other consciousness, then, be immediate in the sense of absolutely simple? We must answer, No. However simple a sensation is, of however little it is the sensation, it is the sensation of something. If we call it A, it is felt through, or as, something else, B. Every sensation which is an element in experience refers to something else, from which it is distinct, or of which it is a particular form; it is symbolic, it *means* something besides itself; and therefore it is mediate. There is, indeed, a sense in which we can speak of a sensation as though it had no meaning, no reference

beyond itself. We can describe it as an occurrence which comes and goes, and we can speak of the mind as a series of such occurrences. But in speaking thus we do not speak of the sensation as an element in intelligent experience. In experience, consciousnesses do not simply come and go, they come and go for me; and it is impossible for them in such experience to be disconnected units. The moment a sensation is fixed, it has *some* connexion, some meaning, and is therefore to some extent mediate.

There is then no absolutely immediate apprehension. The distinction of immediate and mediate is a relative one. A very immediate sensation should mean a sensation very little mediate, one very little connected with anything else. As the sensation enters as an element into wider and wider wholes, it becomes more mediate. To the ignorant person who stands before the fire and says he feels hot, the consciousness of heat is very much more 'immediate' than it is to the man of science, to whom heat is an element in an immense body of connexions, and whose mind in grasping the conception of heat goes through a very large number of media. If we use the word 'intuition,' then, in contrast with conception, 'intuition' should only mean to us a relatively immediate apprehension, a less mediate as compared with a more mediate.

There is, however, one sense in which not simple sensations only, but every definite piece of consciousness, may truly be called immediate or intuitive—in the sense that it is what it is, and cannot be explained by, or analyzed into, anything which does not contain it. If, for example, a man is told that his perception or conception of 'right' is derivable from and analyzable into certain quite

different conceptions, which have preceded it in the history of his mind or other people's minds, he may in that sense truly answer that his consciousness of right is intuitive. And this is true of any definite consciousness, e.g. his consciousness of 'red.' His consciousness of right or of red may be 'explained' by tracing its history and showing (truly) that it would not be what it is if certain other consciousnesses had not preceded it; but he will justly maintain that it is what it is, that it cannot be analyzed into those preceding consciousnesses, and that, after the 'explanation,' both they and it remain what they were before. In this sense his consciousness of right is intuitive; but then this does not mean anything mysterious, or that everybody is born with this consciousness, or that it can be got without effort, practice, or experience.

The antithesis of *presentative* and *representative* consciousness is only another way, and a metaphorical way, of putting the contrast of immediate and mediate. By a presentative consciousness is meant one in which the object is actually present to me, by a representative consciousness one in which an object once present is reproduced. All reproduction implies a medium, and therefore all representative consciousness is mediate. This distinction, again, though convenient, is merely relative. There is no experience in which what is present is absolutely simple; but, the further knowledge advances, the *more* representative consciousness becomes.

These antitheses are parallel to those which were formulated by Locke and Hume respectively between sensation and reflexion, and between impression and idea. It would seem to be the case that these distinctions cannot be absolute. It is incorrect to speak

as if there were first a number of disconnected and simple feelings, and as if then thought or reflexion took these and combined them in various ways. There is really a continuous process going on, from the beginning of experience, in which sensation becomes more and more thought, and is more and more modified; but at no point do we experience a sensation which is absolutely unrelated, nor is there any thought of which the elements do not eventually imply a sensitive organism. Hume's language conveys the notion that the most simple experiences are somehow more real than what is derived from them; and this idea, if pressed to its conclusion, implies that, the more we think, the further we get from truth. If, on the other hand, we get at truth more by thinking more, we must say that what is given in sensation is less real, has less of reality in it, than the results of developed thinking. No doubt the prevalent idea that what are called conceptions are comparatively unreal arises from the true observation that most of our 'conceptions' are *not* the results of developed thinking, but are what Hume represented all thought as being, weaker and more faded reminiscences of fuller experiences. But the right corollary of this truth is not that we should take refuge in the most meagre of our experiences and hope to find reality there, but that we should endeavour to realize, to think out, those empty forms which we carry about in our minds under the name of general conceptions.

SECTION VIII

CONCEIVABILITY AND SENSATION AS TESTS OF TRUTH

Conceivability.

THE import of the word 'conceive' is that in all rational experience there is a holding together (*concipere*) of certain elements, a synthesis of elements in a unity: and every object of experience implies such a synthesis. If we begin with the most elementary conception possible, 'being' implies at least the synthesis, the distinguishing and holding together, of 'this' and 'that.' Space implies at least something outside something else, that is, a synthesis of the two; and time implies the synthesis of 'before' and 'after.' Leaving such elementary conceptions as these, and coming to more concrete things, we find objects commonly analyzed into their properties. A thing, we are told, is the sum of its properties; at any rate it is the unity of a certain manifold. Now the condition of anything being a unity is that its elements should be compatible or consistent with one another; and, following this out, we come to the much-disputed principle that conceivability, i.e. the capacity of being held together as a unity of elements, is a test of truth,—that the true is the conceivable.

To take simple instances, it would be agreed that it is inconceivable that 'before' and 'after' should be the same, or that there should be a time in which there was

no before and after; or that two straight lines should enclose a space. In these cases it is implied that the thing conceived (time or space) has a definite nature, which includes certain things and excludes other things. Philosophers who have made conceivability a test of truth mean that, the conception of a thing being the clear apprehension of this definite nature, anything inconsistent with this nature, and therefore inconceivable, is impossible, just as anything that can be thought together with this is possible. Thus the question, Is this spatially possible? must come back to the question, Can I think this consistently with what I know of space? The same test is really applied in more concrete cases, e.g. in the question of the credibility of an asserted fact in history. After all our investigation of evidence we come to the question, Can I think this fact consistently with all that I know of the matter in hand? The distrust of the idea that conceivability is a test of truth is largely due to misunderstanding, and to a failure to realize that the conceivability of a thing is ultimately equivalent to its consistency with the sum of experience.

In order to discuss more fully whether the conceivable and the objective are to be identified, let us ask the question, What is the *minimum concipibile*, the least possible conceivable? and then let us enquire whether this is the same as the least possible object. If so, conceivability and objectivity will be found to coincide, at least in the simplest instance.

Can we then conceive A to be both A and not-A? No, we cannot; and therefore the least conceivable possible may be said to be something which is the same with itself and different from something else. Try to conceive something which does not submit to this condition, and

you find that your mind is a blank, and that you are not performing an act of thought at all. If then this is the least conceivable, what is the least objectivity, the least that would make a thing a thing? Would anything be anything if it were in no two consecutive moments the same with itself, and if it were not different from everything else? No, it would be nothing. (This is the germ of the conception of substance.) At this stage, then, it would seem that the thinkable and the objective cannot be distinguished. They are subject to one and the same condition or law, and must conform to it. The law of Identity is the expression of this condition; or rather it *is* the condition of there being any thought at all, and of there being any thing at all.

Again, we cannot conceive or have an experience unless there is some continuity in our experiences; we cannot conceive A as absolutely independent of B, and yet conceive A and B as both objects. And to say that an object that stood in no relation to anything else would be no object, would be nothing, is simply to say this in other words. The principle of causality is the developed expression of this truth, and therefore there is no difference between saying that it is a law or condition of experience or conceivability, and saying that it is a law or condition of objectivity.

Thus we must beware of supposing that first there are things identical in difference, and that then we conceive them; to conceive or think *is* to identify in difference, and a thing is a determinate matter of consciousness or it is nothing. So with causality; there are not first causes and effects, and then our conceptions of them; to think causally *is* to connect things as somehow affecting one another and forming one world. All experience—

conceivability at its least, and objectivity at its least—implies a certain synthesis of diverse elements.

Going further, taking thought or the world in more developed stages, we have seen that space and time also imply syntheses of parts. And it makes no difference whether we say that each of these objects has a certain nature of its own and therefore certain laws of its own, or whether we say that we cannot conceive of space or of time except in certain ways; so that, instead of saying that we think or conceive *of* space or time, we might just as accurately talk of our thinking spatially or temporally. The conditions of space and time are not one thing for the world and another thing for our minds. To say that it is a law of space that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, is exactly the same as saying that we cannot think of two straight lines as enclosing a space. To say that the nature of space imposes this inability on our minds is only to restate the fact more metaphorically. The laws of space are equally laws of thought, though they are not commonly called so.

The same thing is true when we advance to the objects with which the physicist, or the chemist, or the biologist, deals. These objects involve further syntheses beyond that of space, or certain laws in addition to the laws of space. These laws again are simply the expression of the natures of the objects; but we might just as well call them the laws of thought as it is concerned with those objects, the laws of thinking physically or chemically or biologically.

Going still further, we may take the world as it is for aesthetic or for moral science. Objects here are qualified in still more complex ways, or involve many new syntheses. Take a line as it enters first into a triangle,

then into a crystal, and then into a picture, and you see that at each stage it belongs to an object more complex than the last. Each of these objects, however, has a nature and laws of its own to which the line must conform. And here again the laws of the aesthetic object are equally laws of our thinking aesthetically; or there is, as we say, a logic of art, as also of morality. For instance, when we say that it is inconceivable that the same act should be perfectly honourable and perfectly dishonourable, i.e. that we cannot hold the two things together in the mind, we imply that morality has principles or laws which are alike laws of its nature and of conceivability. It may be answered that the inconceivability would not be the same to a person who had not our moral experience, but it is equally true that it is only to a person who has our experience of space that our spatial conceivabilities and inconceivabilities would be conceivable and inconceivable. Or take the case of art: an artist might say, 'These two colours, or these two lines, cannot be thus combined, for they contradict one another'; and this expresses a principle the same in kind as that expressed in the statement that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. No doubt the principles in the two cases are extremely different; and about the one there may be much controversy, whereas there is little about the other. But any one who assumes the existence of laws in anything, or who speaks of a 'right' and a 'wrong' in regard to it, really commits himself to the principle that the right in that sphere is equivalent to the conceivable. To say that a combination of two tones is musically wrong is to say, 'I cannot, consistently with the laws or principles of musical thinking, conceive or hold together those two tones.' To sum up, then, each

sort of object has its own laws, and every such law is a law of conception.

Every one admits *some* laws of conceivability and applies them to objects. Every one, in other words, admits in *some* cases that the conceivable is identical with the empirically possible. But different people draw the line differently. What is conceivable to one person or age may be inconceivable to another, and what is conceivable to a person at one time may be inconceivable to him at another. What can be conceived by a person is ultimately determined by his experience; his conception of an object is proportionate to his experience of it ('experience' being taken in the widest sense, as equivalent to what he has been, or thinks he might be, conscious of). And the same thing is true of any age. Take the case of the antipodes, which were once inconceivable. They *were* inconceivable at a time when certain conceptions of motion, &c., were held; and the people of that time might justifiably deny that they existed. The facts from which those people argued were facts of observation, and they remain so; but they were to those people more limited facts than they are to us, and what we call the same facts are the same with great additions. If we take the phrase 'the sun rises,' it means very different things at different times. It remains always true that the sun occupies a higher position relative to me at noon than at ten o'clock; but some people have interpreted this fact by the idea that a chariot and horses were being driven up a steep road, and others by the conception of the body called the sun actually moving up the sky. The different conceptions which different people have expressed by the word 'sun' depend on the other conceptions with which this conception 'sun' is

connected in their minds, and on the ways in which it is connected. It remains at this day quite conceivable that the sun goes round the earth, if that means that one yellow body goes round another; but an astronomer would say that it is inconceivable that the sun goes round the earth, i.e. that if you realized mentally all the conditions involved in the conception you would find it self-contradictory. In the same way, as we have seen, there is no difficulty in conceiving a centaur, so long as your conception is merely spatial; but a biologist would say that if you saw all that is involved in a centaur you would pronounce it inconceivable.

When, then, is a man justified in saying that a thing is inconceivable? When, and in so far as, he has reason to believe that he has exhausted the conditions of the phenomenon in question. Otherwise his logical course is to suspend his judgment. And towards most things this is obviously our proper attitude; they are neither conceivable nor inconceivable; in regard to them we are aware of our limitations. There is no surer sign of a really educated mind than the power of pronouncing and of suspending judgment at the right times. The more educated we are, i.e. the wider our intelligent experience is, the more things are inconceivable to us, and (we must add) the more things are conceivable. It is not ignorance which has the widest possibilities.

If by 'conceivable' we mean 'able to be held together so as to be coherent,' the true is also the conceivable. But 'conceivable' ought not to be understood in the narrow and superficial sense commonly attached to it; it does not mean 'able to be pictured.' 'Can you conceive a thing?' ought to mean, 'Can you think it completely out?' Really to do this is, of course,

impossible; but when a man comes to the point where he can conscientiously say, 'If this is true, or if that is not true, then the whole of the rest of my experience falls to the ground,' then he is justified in pronouncing the one thing to be inconceivable, and the other to be conceivable.

Test of Truth.

The point in speaking of conceivability as a *test* of truth is that everything is experienced as an element in or of something else, as something related in a more or less determinate way to something else in one world. The conceivable is that which admits of being thought along with certain other things according to certain principles of union or synthesis. To apply to anything the test of conceivability is to try whether it fulfils this condition. It will be worth while to look more closely at the meaning of 'test.'

In the first place, 'testing' clearly implies that the test we employ is something different from the thing tested; we cannot in strictness speak of testing a thing by itself. To ask whether a thing is really what I take it to be, whether A is really A, is to ask whether A is related to other possible experiences B, C, as I suppose it to be. To test an experience A is to try to actualize some other possible experience B which we expect to accompany it,—which we have reason to believe ought to be present if A is really A. For example, I go into a dark room, and, touching something, I ask if it is really a table. This question does not mean, Is the sensation of touch really a sensation of touch? It means, If a candle were lighted, should I see something of a certain colour and shape? If I lifted this something, should I have a certain

impression of weight? and so on. Every question I ask about experience *A*, the sensation of touch, expects for its answer other experiences, *B*, *C*, *D*, which I have come to hold together with *A* in the conception of table. In other words, 'table' stands for a synthesis or principle, according to which I expect certain experiences to be connected in certain ways. Again, even supposing I ask the question, Is *A*, the sensation of touch, really a sensation of touch? this question, if it means anything, requires for its answer a reference to something beyond *A*. It may mean, for instance, Am I interpreting the sensation rightly, or am I under an illusion such as is possible, in a morbid condition of the organism, regarding the simplest sensation? And this means, in other words, Am I right in assuming that, along with the sensation, something *else* is present (a certain modification of the nerves of my skin, for example) which would be present if the sensation were a sensation of touch? About a literally simple feeling there can be no question raised, for such a feeling is not a constituent of our experience. Every feeling we are conscious of is felt as a modification of another feeling, or in contrast with another, or in some way which compels us to regard it as a related feeling. By no possibility can we raise the question whether a feeling is real without going beyond the feeling itself, and, in effect, asking whether something else is there.

Thus to 'test' any experience is, literally, to 'try' it, to experiment with it. And all experimentation, the most ignorant and the most scientific, means, ultimately, trying to experience the same thing over again in a different context. It means either trying whether something else which we expect to accompany the thing does accompany

it, or trying whether the thing remains the same when the circumstances are altered. I test my incipient judgment that this is a table by adding a fresh element, a visual sensation, or another sensation of touch. The experiment is very simple and comes to an end very soon; but the most difficult and prolonged experimentation is, in principle, the same process. All progress in knowledge is, in this wide sense, a gradual process of experimentation. Every judgment is the expression of a hypothesis which waits to be confirmed, or not, by experiment. Or, to put it otherwise, in every significant judgment we state that something of which we have had experience is now being experienced under different circumstances, that the thing in question is the same thing with a difference. And to test the judgment is to try whether the thing *is* the same.

Every concept, in the same way, may be said to be a certain form of synthesis waiting to be filled up. The ultimate postulate of *all* experience is that of a self which is the centre and unity of all experiences, or (it is the same thing) of a world which is one through all its changes. This is the most elementary concept or form of synthesis, that which I bring to *all* experience, and which I expect *every* experience to fill up. Every *specific* concept is a specific form of synthesis; and the question of what kind are the other elements *B*, *C*, *D*, which we expect to coexist with *A*, depends on the question what is the specific form of synthesis concerned. Space, for instance, is such a specific form, which we bring to the world, and under which the world shows itself to us in a certain aspect. If we take the judgment, 'That is two feet off,' a judgment of spatial distance, 'two feet' is the concept which awaits experience, and the other element

in the synthesis by which I roughly test it may be a certain amount of the stretch of my arm. The concept of space is gradually filled up, the nature of space is gradually discovered, by all sorts of more elaborate experiments. A geometer in reasoning is perpetually constructing new cases of something of which he has already a general conception. Geometrical reasoning may be said to consist in wondering whether a thing is possible and then trying it by experiment; and the good experimenter in any science is the man who sees how to make a good test of the possibility he has in his mind.

Every experiment, then, is governed by the conception we bring to it; and every conception is a certain expectancy or form of synthesis, waiting to be tested and filled up. The most elementary or general of these expectancies has been described above, but it is also often described as the conception or principle of the uniformity of nature. This means simply that there would be no experience, no world, for us unless we expected things to retain their identity or to behave in certain permanent ways. If this expectancy were not fulfilled there would be no things at all. The principle of the uniformity of nature is simply the principle of identity in difference. If you never had two experiences in some sense identical, you could have no experience; and any two experiences in any way identical are experiences of the uniformity of nature. The phrase does not mean that nature continually repeats herself; in one sense nature never repeats herself; every identity we observe is accompanied by difference. The phrase does not imply monotony or exclude variety. It means, '*A* is always *A*, though it may occur with the

differences *B*, *C*, *D* . . .' All problems of testing or verification resolve themselves into the question, Is this, which I suppose to be *A*, really *A*?

Sensation as Test of Truth.

We have seen that testing anything implies that something else is in some way related to the thing in question, and related to it according to some determinate rule or principle. In ordinary practice we test only to a limited point; and there are certain conventional tests agreed on, which differ according to the field of knowledge concerned. Such a conventional test, for example, is tangibility, which seems as a rule to have the prerogative even over visibility, probably because touch is the earliest vehicle of experience and the most continuously present. We may, however, raise the question, What is the *ultimate* test, and what is the point at which we should stop in the process of verification? In the abstract we can only answer, The ultimate test is that about which there can be the least possible doubt; that in which I am most directly conscious of being what I judge myself to be; and verification should stop at the point at which I am obliged to say that, if this is not what I judge it to be, I am not at all.

The question, however, would still remain, In what form then do I realize my own existence most fully? When, where, how, does the certainty of it most come home to me? And to this question most people would probably answer that some form of sense-perception is the mode in which we most directly realize our own existence. Hence it is sometimes said that the ultimate test of all truth is the possibility of *sensation*; a statement which sounds like the opposite of the doctrine that the test

of truth is conceivability. What then does this statement mean?

It can hardly mean that the most real reality is visibility or tangibility. No one would assert that these properties of the world are more real than any others; no one would say, to take a very crude instance, that the reality of God depends upon whether you can touch him or not. The statement must ultimately mean that, we being what we are, and getting all our experience, as we do, through sensitive organs, nothing is real which does not admit of affecting us *at least* in the way of sensation. As simple sensible qualities are the beginnings, the ἀρχαί, of all experience, the centre from which we perpetually advance, so, however far afield we go in discovery, they remain the limitations of human experience. This is obviously the case with the physical world. It is, indeed, perfectly true that, in one sense, the solar system and its laws are not sensible objects; that no one can touch the laws of motion; that the conception of motion is one obtained by very great effort of thought, and that almost all statements made about moving bodies are complicated inferences. Still the truth of a theory of motion does include the possibility of experiencing certain sensations; and a man of science, like Newton, would admit that, unless under certain circumstances he could experience certain sensations of sight, his theory of motion would fall to the ground. In this sense the possibility of experiencing such sensations is a test of theory; or, to put it otherwise, suppose the theory to be absolutely verified, then among other elements in this verification one would be certain sensations. Certainly there would be no ground for saying that this element is *more* a test of truth than

others. Visual and other sensations get their prominence merely from their simplicity, and because they are a test which every one can apply. But it remains true that in all human experience some relation to a sensitive organism is a necessary element, and that a conception which ignores this is so far untrue. 'In *all* human experience'; for the statement holds good beyond physical experience. Duty, for example, is a human experience, an experience of beings with a sensitive organization. Duty is not sensible; but we cannot experience it, cannot do an act of duty, without at the same time having certain sensitive experiences. A conception of duty, therefore, which did not ultimately include the human body in it would be illusory; there would be no object answering to it in human experience.

If it is true in this sense that sensation is a necessary element in every conception, and is thus a test of truth, how is it that sensation is also spoken of as the most illusory thing in the world? How is it that we find such opposite things said of it, and of its importance in knowledge?

When we say that any experience is illusory, we really mean that it is wrongly interpreted, we never mean that it has no existence. We often talk as though there were something of which we can speak and think, and which yet is unreal; but an unreal thing is simply nothing, and what we call illusory is not unreal. If a person sees what he takes to be a ghost, while it is really a turnip with a candle in it, he is under an illusion. But his visual sensations are not unreal; they are as real as his alarm; his illusion consists in going beyond them and interpreting them into a supernatural phenomenon. All falsehood is of the nature of misinterpretation. Just as

a true experience means one that is rightly connected with others, so a false or illusory experience is one that is wrongly connected with others. And, as we have seen, there is no way of testing the truth or falsehood of an experience except by going beyond it, and seeing whether it is connected with certain other experiences in certain ways.

Accordingly, when we say that sensation is illusory, what we mean is not that it is unreal, but that it enables us to go with safety only a very little way beyond itself, and that it gives very wide opportunities for misinterpretation. Visual sensation, for example, is extremely untrustworthy, in the sense that, if we confined ourselves to what we can strictly be said to see, we should be confined within a very narrow circle, and should make all kinds of mistakes. The more nearly sensation approaches to mere sensation, the more isolated is it, the less extensive and connected is the experience of which it forms a part, and therefore the more opportunity is there for illusion; it is likely to be taken to mean the wrong thing because it *may* mean so many things. Conversely, as we have already seen, the wider the context in which a thing becomes an element, the more conceivable it becomes; and every fresh connexion makes it more conceivable or true. The truest and most tested truths are, therefore, those which express the widest uniformities, are the same in the greatest number of differences, hold good in the largest contexts; and the truths least true, least tested, and most liable to misinterpretation, are the most limited, those that hold good in the narrowest contexts. Such are the judgments based most directly on sensation; and this is the ground of the polemic against sensation.

The old comparison of the process of acquiring know-

ledge to the reading of a book may illustrate the truth about sensation. If we take a single word at random out of the book, how much truth or meaning has it? Apart from its sentence, paragraph, chapter, its meaning is reduced to a minimum. So it is with a simple sensation. *Some* meaning the word has (for it would not be itself if it did not suppose *some* context), but its meaning is as little as it can be; and so it is again with a sensation, which would be nothing if it did not tell us of something else. Again, as long as you consider merely the isolated word, you may interpret it in many ways, and all of them may be wrong; but with every extension of the context of the word its meaning becomes more certain; and this also holds of a sensation. On the other hand, the whole meaning of the sentence, and, in a sense, the whole meaning of the book, may be said to depend on the understanding of a single word[1]; and so it may be said that a given piece of truth is not true to me unless it comes home to me through some simple sensation, and unless I experience that element of it; and its truth may be said to depend on the possibility of its being thus experienced.

Hence the progress of knowledge and truth consists in the gradual widening of experience; that is, in our continually experiencing the same things in fresh contexts. And we must remember that every bit of truth, in being tested, also tests. I find out what *this* word means by comparing it with the same word in other passages; and in the process it not only receives meaning but gives it. It is not merely the case that every new experience *adds*

[1] Or rather, to interpret the book, you must know at least the minimum of the meaning of the language, and, if the book does not at least mean that, it will mean nothing to you.

something to previous knowledge; it affects and modifies that knowledge. Knowledge is not a process of mere accretion. This is seen in a startling way in the effect of a great discovery or a new idea; it may revolutionize the whole mind of a generation; it does not merely add to the circumference of knowledge, it penetrates to the centre and rearranges the whole body of ideas. Hence, again, it follows from the nature of the progress of experience that no concept, no 'meaning,' can be final. If you ask at a given time what is the conception of a certain thing, the answer may attempt to fix the experience of mankind for the moment, and to define it by drawing imaginary limits; but this can be only for the moment.

SECTION IX

CONCEPT AND THING. SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE. SELF AND NOT-SELF [1]

WE have considered certain antitheses in which conception is contrasted with perception, or a mediate and representative mode of apprehension with an intuitive or presentative. We pass now to another set of antitheses, which appear to place conception or thought, as something 'subjective,' in opposition to things, or reality, or what is 'objective.'

I. What is meant by the antithesis of *Concept* and *Thing?*

A concept is sometimes contrasted with a thing on the ground that it is merely something 'in my mind.' But, if 'concept' has the meaning we have assigned to it, there can be no ultimate contrast of this kind. The thing 'tree' is my various experiences of it in presence of it and in thinking of it; and every word that I use in describing this thing expresses, and must express, my consciousness or experience. The tree 'outside' my consciousness of it is simply nothing to me. In the same way a triangle, i.e. the space contained between three straight lines, is an object of consciousness, and there can be no ultimate contrast between this concept and the thing triangle or the fact of triangularity.

What sense then can we give to the distinction?

[1] [Compare Note C.]

(*a*) I can distinguish between the fact of triangularity and my concept of triangularity if I mean by the latter my experience of triangularity as accompanied by *other* experiences, feelings, &c.; and if I mean by the former my experience of triangularity, regarded as disconnected from these other irrelevant experiences. Again (*b*), in another way my concept may be distinguished from the thing or fact. My concept of triangularity may well be an inadequate concept: it is so, for instance, if a triangle means to me nothing more than a space contained between three straight lines. A man who knew more would say that my conception was a long way off the fact, and he would be right. But that which he calls the 'fact' would not be different in kind from my conception; it would be my conception very much extended. The contrast here, then, between concept and fact is really the contrast between a less complete and a more complete conception. In the same way a scientific conception is said to be much nearer to the 'fact' than a popular conception, not because it is composed of elements different in kind from those which form the popular conception, but because it contains *more* elements, and because these elements are better arranged. And though the most scientific conception falls short of the fact, and is only 'nearer' to it, this 'fact' is still nothing but an extension of the experience contained in the conception. If a man could experience the whole fact, he would not *cease* to conceive it, he would conceive it *more*.

Concepts, then, are not mysterious somethings which intervene between us and things, the 'concepts' to which Mill objects as misleading superfluities added to names and things. A concept is a certain experience held together in the mind. My experience of a thing is what

I am conscious of about it, and this is my conception of it.

II. *Subjective and Objective.*

With the antithesis of concept and thing is connected that of subject and object, and that of subjective and objective.

As to the usage of the words *subjective* and *objective*, it is curious that the sense they commonly bear now is just the opposite of their original meaning. 'Subjectivum,' in the writings of the Schoolmen, where it first appears, applies to the real subject of attributes, the ὑποκείμενον of which they are predicated. 'Objectivum' is used of anything regarded as an object to us (ἀντικείμενον) or 'idealiter,' i.e. from the point of view of our idea of it. Gradually 'subjectum' came to be appropriated to one particular subject of attributes, namely, the human mind or self. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the modern usage was becoming tolerably fixed; but Berkeley still employs 'objective' in the old sense; for instance, when he says that, as the *esse* of things is *percipi*, 'their real and objective nature is the same.'

As used now, the words are strictly correlative terms, the one being taken to imply a contrast with the other. It is difficult to detach from the chaos of their meanings a few round which the rest may be grouped; but the antithesis is used to convey the following principal contrasts:—

1. Between the experience of this or that individual, and the experience of mankind, or of some group of individuals, or of scientific men.

2. Between human experience in general, and the world as it may be supposed to appear to some other being or beings.

3. Between that which is in consciousness or exists for a mind, and that which is outside consciousness or unrelated to a mind.

There is, we must first observe, an implication common to all three antitheses. When people contrast any experience, as 'subjective,' with something described as 'objective,' they mean to convey that the former is less true or real than the latter. For example, in thinking of heat, we are told to put aside heat in the 'subjective' sense, i.e. anybody's particular susceptibility to heat, the implication being that this has little to do with the real or objective nature of heat. And so in the sphere of art or of morality what is called 'subjective' is understood to be less true than what is called 'objective.' Now this distinction of degrees of truth or reality is one that we want to make and must make; but it is unfortunate that the words 'subjective' and 'objective' should be chosen to convey it. For a 'merely subjective' idea is just as much an 'object' as anything else in the world, and my particular feeling of heat just as much an object as the 'objective' heat of the physicist. And conversely the 'objective,' however true or real it may be, is just as much an object of *mind* as the merest whim or fancy. Unfortunately, however, 'subjective' and 'objective' are apt to suggest the antithesis of 'in the mind' and 'outside the mind'; and therefore we must be on our guard against the influence of that antithesis if we choose to use 'subjective' and 'objective' to convey the perfectly justifiable distinction of degrees of truth or reality.

1. Bearing this in mind, we may say that, in the first usage of the words which we have to consider, 'subjective' generally means the experience of random

individuals, 'objective' the experience of mankind (or sometimes of educated mankind); the one is *τὸ ἴδιον*, the other *τὸ κοινόν*. Now of course numbers, as such, can be no criterion of truth; and yet on *certain* subjects (for in this matter there is a great difference between different subjects) *τὸ πᾶσι δοκοῦν*, universal consent (which is never really universal), is important to ascertain, and the agreement of many minds in one view gives a certain probability in favour of its truth. But the reason lies not in the number as such, but in the diversity of opinions, feelings, circumstances, through which the view persists. The *ἴδιον* has, in comparison, the less probability of truth, because it belongs only to a limited area of human nature; the *κοινόν* has the greater probability, because it holds through a larger area of differences. We may observe that the truth is *κοινόν*, also, in the sense that it unites: different people are united in so far as they all see the same thing to be true; it is ignorance and prejudice that isolate.

The distinction of 'subjective' and 'objective,' in this sense, is a relative distinction. Probably there is no truth which is merely true in one place, at one moment, and for one person. Nor is there any truth in which all the people in the world would agree. But the progress of knowledge, or the increase of truth, means that the irrelevant elements in each man, those which do not affect the thing in question, are more and more put aside, and the essential elements more and more recognized and agreed upon; and we may, if we choose, call this an increase of the 'objective' at the expense of the 'subjective.'

2. Secondly, 'subjective' may be extended to mean that which is true for man, and 'objective' may be

taken to mean some truer truth—the world as it may be conceived to be to some higher and fuller intelligence.

If we use the words thus, we must remember that it is we men who use them and for whom the antithesis exists. To *talk* of anything outside human experience is, *ipso facto*, to bring it into human experience. How, then, can we men speak, with any sense, of the subjective as that which is for man, and of the objective as that which is for some higher intelligence? We must answer that the contrast, whatever it means, cannot be one between a reality which implies consciousness, and a reality which implies none. If the 'objective' is to signify a more real world than the world as it is for us, we can only attach a meaning to the 'objective' by thinking of the world as it is for us modified in some way. If I contrast my 'subjective' view with the 'objective' view of a man who knows better than I, I do not suppose an absolute break between my mind and his; the difference is one of degree, and the two views are connected. And in the same way, if I contrast the knowledge of mankind with a more perfect knowledge, this 'objective' knowledge must be a continuation and completion of the 'subjective' knowledge. Otherwise the 'objective' is a mere blank, and it is idle to speak of it. In this sense, again, we may speak of an 'unknowable,' and may represent the unknowable as the objective; only we must remember that in so speaking of the unknowable we are knowing it—knowing it as the 'beyond' of the known. If it be said that this is a contradiction in terms, we can only answer that it is the fact: man is conscious at one and the same time of knowing and not knowing[1]. If we

[1] [Compare Note A.]

like, then, to use 'subjective' for the determinately known, and the correlative 'objective' for the 'beyond' of that—the 'beyond' which is always present—well and good; only the distinction will *not* be one between that which is matter of conscious experience and that which is not.

[1] It is well to insist on this because of the constant association of the word 'objective' with the idea of an existence out of relation with consciousness. There is a notion, for example, that we should come to such an 'objective reality' if we could analyze the world back into its simplest constituents. Thus some popularized views of science convey the impression that, if everything could be shown to be some form of matter and motion, matter and motion would be the objectively real, compared with which everything else would have only a subjective reality. And this corresponds with the earliest formulation of the antithesis of subjective and objective in the saying of Democritus, *νόμῳ γλυκὺ καὶ νόμῳ πικρόν, νόμῳ θερμόν, νόμῳ ψυχρόν, νόμῳ χροιή· ἐτεῇ δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν.* Now it is quite true that it may rightly be considered a great achievement of science to show that all phenomena are forms of motion. But *why* should this be an ideal of science? Why should it be thought to explain the world? In one sense it is true to say that such a discovery would leave everything as it was before; all the differences of phenomena—of sound, heat, electricity—are not done away with by it. But it puts them in a new light. It gives us a language by

[1] [This paragraph has been left in its place, although it does not deal with the second of the three contrasts of 'subjective' and 'objective.' It represents remarks made at the end of a lecture, when Nettleship probably did not care to begin the discussion of the third contrast.]

which they can all be expressed in terms of one thing, and this a thing the nature of which is, comparatively, accurately known. It enables us to measure them and compare them. It not merely increases our practical power, but heightens our sense of the intelligibility and the unity of things. Accordingly we may, if we choose, speak of motion as 'objective,' if we mean that we understand it more exactly than we do most things; and, in this sense, the simpler the elements we have to consider, the more objective they will be. But if we mean that they—that time and space and motion, for example—are objective in the sense of being outside the mind, or of having a reality different in kind from that of other objects of human experience, that is a distinction which cannot be maintained.

3. We have now to consider this distinction further. The objective, in the two senses hitherto discussed, has been seen to be nothing 'outside' consciousness. The further question is whether we can give a sense to the antithesis of the subjective, as 'a mere idea' or that which is 'in the mind,' and the objective, as that which is 'outside the mind.'

[1] Let us take the old instance. The idea of £100 is said to be a very different thing from the real or objective fact of £100. What then is the idea of £100? As soon as we reflect we find that the idea has no fixed meaning, that its meaning varies more or less with the

[1] [The following discussion repeats and develops the previous statement of this Section, that the distinction of concept and thing is really the distinction of less complete and more complete concept. It is not denied, therefore, that an idea (concept) of £100 differs from the fact of £100; but it is insisted that both alike are objects to subjects, that both are real, and that the superior reality of the second object lies in its content, not in its supposed independence of a subject.]

various persons who use the words, and that the idea, the matter of consciousness, has in each case its own appropriate reality. A child's idea of £100, what £100 means to a child, may be a hundred round yellow things of a certain size. This idea has its own reality; a hundred, yellowness, roundness, &c., are all facts. If you call it a 'mere' idea, you do not mean that they are *not* facts, but that the real £100 is *more* than the idea. To the child the reality of £100, the objective fact, *is* exactly the content of its idea; and the objective fact to you is not different in kind from this, but contains something more, which, for reasons good or bad, is considered more important and real.

What is the economist's idea of £100? Most of the contents of the child's idea find no place in it, or have taken a subordinate place. The economist's idea of £100 is a certain value, or purchasing power; and this is also the objective fact to him. This value is the power to do something which implies various persons maintaining a certain understanding with one another. If anything is 'inside' the mind, such an understanding is; and the economist's 'objective reality' would simply disappear if there were not persons who were capable of that understanding, and to whom things had value.

Suppose sovereigns to go out of circulation and to become very scarce; what will be the coin-collector's idea of £100? It will differ from the two former conceptions, though it will combine elements of each. £100 will mean still an object of value, but of 'fancy' value. This 'fancy' value is perfectly 'real' or objective; but it, and the real £100 of the collector, would disappear if there were no one who cared about the age, historical associations, and artistic interest of coins.

Suppose, again, there were persons who could appreciate neither the economic nor the fancy value, nor even the engraving on a sovereign, what would remain of the £100 to them? We should say that a sovereign, as such, did not exist for them. There would only exist weight, shape, colour, hardness, and the like; and all these imply a feeling subject.

These considerations by no means show that £100 is a mere fancy, but they show that its reality, though we talk as if it were perfectly fixed, is purely relative; so that if its reality is its objectivity, its objectivity depends on the subject to which it is an object, and seems to have no sense out of this relation. Thus, when it is said that, the idea of £100 is different from the reality, we have to remember (1) that the real £100, whatever it is, is still ideas; that all the words we use about it imply conscious subjects, and their feelings, views, desires, and the like; and (2) conversely, that, though we talk of the idea of £100 being merely in the mind, it is no more so than the objective fact; it is itself a perfectly real fact, the object of a subject, with its own reality, which we can characterize.

The phrases 'inside the mind' and 'outside the mind' are responsible for a great deal of confusion. We forget that 'inside' and 'outside' refer in strictness to nothing but objects in space, and that the use of them in reference to anything else is metaphorical. We conventionally fix 'reality' to mean some sort of 'outsideness,' and 'subjectivity' to mean some kind of 'insideness'; and we forget that there is no 'outside' without an 'inside.' Let us take another instance of object and subject—the table and me. (*a*) In what sense is the table outside me? In the same sense as it is outside a chair, and in no other

sense: that is, 'me' is here my body. Are the table and I in this sense object and subject? Certainly not. The table and I (my body) are two correlatives, and object and subject are two correlatives, but object and subject are correlatives of a totally different nature from two things spatially external to one another. If the table becomes an object to me, its spatial externality to 'me' (my body), and its metaphorical externality (the fact that it is an object) to me, have nothing in common but the characteristic that each is a correlative to something else. (*b*) Suppose now that the table becomes an object to me, what is its correlative 'me,' the subject to which it is object? Not my body, but something to which my body and the table are both objects. In thinking of the table as simply an external object, I think of it as outside my body (and other things); the table is not outside my mind, but its externality to my body and other things is an object to my mind. (*c*) Again, suppose the table is an object to me in the sense of being my property, then 'I,' the subject, am something capable of owning property, and that is the only 'I' to which the table belongs. (*d*) Again, if I want the table, if the table is an object of desire to me, then the subject is only the desiring 'I.' There is no abstract 'I' to which the table is object; the object and the subject vary together; if its objectivity is its externality, then the subject is a consciousness capable of spatial experience; and so on.

The question is constantly asked, What is the evidence for the existence of an 'external world'? This question means, in strictness, not what the questioner generally intends, but, 'What is the evidence for there being spatiality?' And as soon as we leave this sense of it

we fall into ambiguities, for we do not know with what metaphorical meaning the question is being asked. It may, no doubt, be pleaded that any metaphorical use of a word must have something in common with the original meaning. But then the conclusion is that, when a person talks of an 'external' world, he must have in mind some 'internal' to which the external is correlative; whereas the questioner, in using 'external,' generally wishes to mean something which is *not* a correlative. Spatial externality has become a symbol of disconnectedness, of one thing having nothing to do with another; and yet, if the questioner dwells upon this spatial externality itself, he will find that to conceive one thing as outside another is to conceive it as closely bound up with another. A person who talks of an external world has already, by this very word, internalized it.

As soon as anything of this kind is urged, it is supposed to mean that the real world is a collection of 'subjective feelings.' But this confusion again is due to a certain conventional usage of the words which describe our minds, consciousness, feelings, &c. As 'external' misleads people into supposing the real to be that which is out of relation to mind, so such a phrase as 'in the mind' misleads them into supposing that to call something an idea or ideas is to deny or diminish its reality. Hence the impression produced on most people by Berkeley was that he held the ordinary things to which we ascribe reality to be illusions. But all the things we call most real are, when we reflect on them, recognized to be ideas or states of mind or consciousness; and there is nothing whatever in these phrases to exclude reality. To speak of a thing as '*my* consciousness' or 'a state of *my* mind' is, it is true, to imply some want of reality. But

the difference indicated by the phrase is an assignable and describable one, for it is *I* who contrast 'my mind' with 'mind,' or what is in my mind with what is objective; and, instead of using the phrase vaguely to convey the notion of unreality, one ought to reflect on the difference that it indicates. So, again, 'consciousness' is commonly used in one or two narrow and restricted senses, and conveys only these senses. 'Consciousness of toothache is the actual feeling, not the idea of it,' some will say, as if 'consciousness' meant only physical feeling. So again, to say that a thing is a fact of consciousness means, to many people, to do away with its reality. Strictly, however, consciousness is co-extensive with experience.

III. *Self and Not-self.*

It appears, then, that in *everything* called human experience there is present self-consciousness, i.e. consciousness analyzable into a self and a not-self[1]. Whatever piece of experience we take, we see that, whether we describe it as ideas or feelings, or again as an object or a thing, we have at length to say that, if it is a feeling, it is felt by something; if it is an idea, it is entertained by something; if it is an object, it is object to a subject. Ideas, states of mind, as experiences, are not things which pass over a surface; if they are really states of consciousness, there is something which is conscious *of* them. Consciousness, conversely, is not consciousness unless it is consciousness of *something*. We can, and we must, analyze any and every experience into two correlative factors; we must say '*we*

[1] [Not necessarily consciousness of a self as against a not-self. For *this* meaning of self-consciousness see what follows.]

experience' and 'we experience *something*'; and this is what is meant by saying that the ultimate fact in experience is self-consciousness, the simultaneous consciousness of a subject and an object.

These correlative factors never have any independent existence; the reality is the inseparable union of the two. And in actual experience no one thinks of separating himself from that which he experiences. It is all one to say 'toothache exists' and 'I experience toothache'; to say 'colour is a fact' and 'I see colour'; to say 'the equality of the angles of a triangle to two right angles is a fact' and 'I understand it'; to say 'duty is a reality' and 'I am conscious of an obligation to act.' When these things are really being experienced, the last thing we think of doing is to separate ourselves from the fact or the fact from ourselves. Again, the more we experience, the more are we able to say, indifferently, that *we* are more, there is more of us, or that the *world* is more, there is more of the world. The growth of experience, that is, is describable indifferently as the growth of ourselves or as the growth of the world.

But, if this is so, how is it that we so habitually divide experience into self, the subject, the inward, on the one side, and the not-self, the object, the outward, on the other; so that experience seems to fall into two disconnected and independent halves?

It may help us if we consider, first, some cases where the consciousness of *self*, as separate from not-self and opposed to it, is most vividly present. (1) 'Self-consciousness,' in the ordinary English sense of the word (altogether different from the philosophical use), is an instance. In the kind of shyness called self-consciousness, what is it of which we are conscious? It may be

perhaps some peculiarity in our dress, or the fact that someone is looking at us. That is, we really for the time being consider that the self is contained in these extremely trivial particulars. And that they really do absorb the self may be demonstrated by the fact that a person intensely 'self-conscious' in that way may be quite incapable of thinking of anything but them. (2) Other instances would be egotism, in the sense of the consciousness of self, as excluding, or limited by, or competing with, other selves; or, again, fear, in which we are intensely conscious of ourselves, and desirous of self-preservation, and in which the self of which we are aware is exclusive of, and painfully contrasted with, a not-self from which we wish to get away. Or (3) take an intellectual instance, the consciousness of difficulty or strangeness in something which we are trying to learn. The thing may interest us, but it stands over against us and shuts us out, and we are uncomfortably conscious of ourselves as limited, and wish to be different.

In all these cases we should generally be said to be intensely conscious of ourselves, but what is really true is that we are conscious of ourselves as limited and exclusive, and it is *this* consciousness of self that is the differentia of such experience. With such experience we contrast conditions in which we are totally free from 'self-consciousness,' such as the state of being intensely interested in anything; and we say, perhaps, 'I was entirely absorbed (or lost) in the thing.' And yet it is at these very times that a man's self is *most* conscious; just as it is not less active, but much more active, when, an intellectual difficulty being overcome, the man understands, and is no longer conscious of 'himself' as

excluded. In all these cases, then, the use of 'self' and 'self-conscious' is most misleading.

If we turn now to the other correlative, the not-self or object, it would be easy to find corresponding misleading uses of 'object' or 'objective,' which again suggest that the world falls into two disconnected halves, and that an object is an object to nobody. A typical instance of what we call objective reality would be matter, by which most of us mean at any rate what occupies space. This may be taken as a type of something into which we, as self-conscious selves, do not enter at all, and we think it absurd to call the spatial world a state of consciousness. Yet when we try to characterize spatiality, to say what it consists in, we at once use terms which imply consciousness just as much as the terms by which we describe pain or colour. We say, for example, that distance is the space traversed between two points—the space, that is, moved through by us or by some other body. But this is to imply consciousness at once; and, if we say that, even if there were no conscious being, distance would still exist, we shall find that what we then mean by distance existing is that, under certain given circumstances, there would be that conscious experience which we describe as the experience of distance.

But, if every experience really implies the two correlative factors, how is it that, as we have just seen, one part of experience seems so very unlike another? Why does space seem to be different in kind from an 'inner' experience? Why do an intense feeling of shyness, and the clear apprehension of the distance between two points, seem to be so far apart from one another? The fact is that, though self-consciousness in its true sense means an experience in which self and object are one and

the same thing, or two in one, yet this experience is constantly, so to say, fading or falling away from itself; and, as it does so, the mutually implicated elements or factors, which have really no independent existence, seem to fall asunder and to receive such an existence, and our world is perpetually getting falsely broken up into separate parts. It is only comparatively seldom that we really and fully experience what we say we experience; and our ordinary language and thought represent but a very partial and faded consciousness. This partiality may be a partiality or defectiveness on the one side or on the other. We may fail to realize either the subjective or the objective element[1]. (*a*) If we take the case of space or the material world, we are so used to this from childhood that it is only by an effort we can realize that we enter into it at all. We talk of it as if it were outside us, half meaning that we experience it without an effort of our own. Yet the most elementary facts of space only exist in so far as they are facts of experience, or acts of our own; and we understand this perhaps when, as we pass beyond them, the subjectivity of

[1] [The following, largely in the words of Nettleship's own notes (which are here very much fuller than usual), gives his meaning briefly, and may be useful:—In actual experience we never separate ourselves from that which we experience. But, out of the given experience, we still talk of 'I' as the subject of *it*, and of *it* as an object. What is this 'I' in general, which I distinguish from, say, colour or duty, and which I yet distinguish as *subject* from them as *objects*? It is a subject to which they are still partly objects, or, rather, it is a subject which is conscious of part of what 'colour' and 'duty' mean; and '*the* object' (colour or duty) with which I contrast it is really just as much another *subject* as another object. The truth is, we have a vague (but fixed) conventional generalized set of experiences which we call I. subject, oneself; and another set which we call *objects*. Really, these objects *are objects to us* all the time, but we do not call them such until their objectivity and our subjectivity reach a certain height above the average.]

space is brought home to us, and we realize that there is no difference between the existence of triangularity and that which we understand (or, if you prefer it, that which is understood) by triangularity. It is just that part of our experience of which, for various reasons, we partly lose our hold that we speak of as the objective world. But this world is not out of our consciousness, and its objectivity is exactly correlative to the amount of subjective activity in the person who speaks of it. Ask a man what space is, and, though he may think he is speaking of something 'external,' he must talk of his own experience, and will enable you to measure his subjectivity. (*b*) Conversely, a great part of the world is conventionally described as 'our own experience,' 'ourselves,' the 'inner' or 'subjective world.' But, if we reflect, we find nothing to correspond with this language; we do not find that the consciousness thus described is the consciousness of a self to the exclusion of a not-self. Take the most 'subjective' experience, and it is still consciousness of self and not-self. The more we keep within 'ourselves' (as in the uncomfortable 'inward' states described before), the more we are conscious of something else shutting us out. Self-consciousness, in the proper sense, is consciousness of self in not-self, and of not-self as self. The more it *is* self-consciousness, the greater the consciousness of duplicity *and* of unity. The less it is self-consciousness, the more one or the other element dominates, and the world of experience falls into two halves, oneself and the objective world. *Then* 'self-consciousness' (as opposed to the objective world) comes to mean certain fixed things in which we are most conscious of self against not-self; i.e. in which we are most intensely conscious of our exclusion and limitation.

The current distinctions, then, of subjective and objective, subject and object, self and not-self, have no precise meaning, nor in our conventional states of mind do they express to us what they ought to express. It is only occasionally that we rise from these states to anything like a true perception of our experience. It is on these moments, when we understand and are active, that we ought to dwell if we wish to arrive at truth.

[At this point some remarks were made on the misunderstanding by which the doctrine of the correlativity of subject and object is supposed to imply that the world ceases to exist when we cease to experience it. These remarks were made at the end of a lecture and were probably hurried, and it is not possible to reproduce them satisfactorily from the reports. The same misunderstanding was, however, touched upon in the course on Logic begun in October, 1886; and the following is an attempt to give, only partly in the original words, the substance of what was said on these two occasions:—

'It does not follow from the doctrine of the implication of subject and object in all experience that "colour ceases to exist when it ceases to be seen," or that "if the human race perished, the world would no longer exist." Statements like these betray, and are partly due to, the confusion which arises from our habit of taking words to stand for a mere fraction of the facts or experiences they signify when understood in their full sense. "Colour," for example, stands for a complex fact, having various aspects and involving many conditions. One of these aspects is its visibility, and one of these conditions is (to speak roughly) a certain affection of the eye; and it is

really this *one* aspect or part of the fact "colour" that we have in mind when we say that, according to the doctrine impugned, colour would cease to exist when it ceased to be seen; we mean that colour *as seen* would cease to exist. And this is perfectly true; for that part of the fact "colour" called its visibility depends upon a certain sensitive affection, and we have supposed this condition of its existence to be removed. If then we assert that colour, as seen, would continue to be real after all human beings (putting the lower animals out of account) had ceased to exist, what can we mean by the statement? We must mean either (*a*) that, *if* there were a subject sensitive in a particular way, it would see colour [i.e. the reality of colour as seen would be a conditional reality], or (*b*) that in some way or other there is eternally a sensitive subject which experiences colour as seen. That is, in either case we should still be affirming the correlativity of object and subject. On the other hand, it is perfectly true that with the disappearance of the human race colour would become a very *different* fact from what it is now; for everything in it which implies a merely human experience, and everything which it contributes to human life, would have ceased to exist.

'The same considerations, taken in reversed order, may be applied to the case of the laws of motion. These laws would still be true if all men died, but the meaning of their "truth" would be seriously changed. For the laws of motion are not something altogether apart from the detailed facts of motion; and the sum of motion, if the human race disappeared, would be different from what it is now. That is, motion would be exactly what it is now, *minus* those modifications of it which are due to human intelligence and the applications of human

intelligence; the reality of motion, in other words, would differ according to the intelligence of which it was the object. If, again, we say that all the laws of motion and their possible consequences are true, whether they are discovered by man or not, this means nothing unless we suppose a mind to which they are true.'

It seems evident that Nettleship's purpose was *solely* to point out (1) that the idea of the world without man, supposed to be denied by the doctrine of subject-object, really implies it; (2) that, on the other hand, the disappearance of humanity (and indeed the birth and death of any individual) must make a *difference* to the world. What he said implies further a positive opinion that human beings are not the only subjects in the universe. But it seems clear that in his restricted treatment of the matter he did not intend to express any view on the questions it suggests as to an 'eternal subject,' or the relation of that subject to finite intelligence, or the like. Nor can the illustration from colour be safely taken to imply that motion, or any other of the physical conditions of colour, involves no reference to sensibility (see pp. 186–7, 198, 200).]

SECTION X

CLASSIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

A CONCEPT, in the wide sense in which we have understood the word, is any definite content of consciousness (a percept being, if we please, distinguished from a concept as a definite content of consciousness implying present sensation). Now, as we also saw, every definite content of consciousness is experienced as a modification of something else. It is something attended to, and in the act of attention distinguished, defined, particularized. Every sensation is experienced as a modification of more general sensibility, the particular sensations of sound as modifications of the general sense of sound. Every figure is experienced as a modification of general spatiality, every virtue as a modification of general excellence, and *everything* as a modification of consciousness in general. That is, consciousness—or, as the Greeks said, being—is the ultimate *genus*, of which all experiences or things are specific forms. In accordance with this terminology, the name *genus* may be applied, in any given case, to that 'something else,' as a modification of which any experience is experienced. And so every concept is what it is (individual), as being a particular modification of something which admits of other

modifications, and which is therefore called general or universal.

Hence every concept is the germ of a *classification.* In *all* thinking or conceiving we may be said to classify. For to classify, in the simplest sense, is to assign to a given thing its place in the world of our experience; to discover and point out what other experience it is a modification of, and what particular modification of that experience it is. For instance, to classify a triangle is to discover of what kind of thing it is a particular case or form. And this is the same as to conceive a triangle. For, when you conceive a triangle as a three-sided figure, this means that you realize that it is a modification of the experience which is called 'figure,' and which admits of other forms or modifications.

And the more definitely we conceive, the more we classify; for each fresh characterization is a fresh modification of something less characterized. If, for example, you enumerate the properties of a table, and say that it is wooden, square, heavy, a dining-table, each of these properties classifies it, each of them at once identifies it with, and distinguishes it from, something else. 'Wooden' identifies it with other wooden things (from which it is also distinguished), and again distinguishes its material from other possible materials of a table: and so with each of its qualifications (which are the 'marks' of the concept).

Everything which we conceive may be classified on various principles, which will differ in value. There is, indeed, no abstract 'best' classification of anything; the best is that which best serves the purpose in view. A dictionary is an instance of a very artificial classification, but the classification is excellent for its purpose; it

enables you to find words easily. The arrangement of some etymological dictionaries, in which words are classified according to their roots, is different because its purpose is different. The latter classification would, however, be called more 'natural.' And this means, speaking roughly, that, as compared with the 'artificial' classification, it includes more of the nature of the thing classified; just as a classification of plants according to colours might be called an artificial classification, because the colour of a plant, though essential to it, tells us so little about it, or is so 'insignificant' a mark of it. An ideal classification would be one which, as soon as you knew how a thing was classified, enabled you to know *all* about the thing. Accordingly a classification may be called better or worse (apart from special purposes) in proportion as it enables you to know more or less about the things classified. And the distinction of 'natural' and 'artificial' ought to have this meaning.

What is implied in saying that an ideal classification would tell one all about the thing classified? It is implied that one would understand each thing in the world to be a modification of some one universal or substance, and that one would understand exactly what modification it is. If this were so, we should know precisely how one thing was related to all other things. The aim of scientific classification is to accomplish something like this for one section of the world; it aims at finding a property or quality, of which the various forms of the subject-matter in question can be shown to be modifications. But so far as, in conceiving a thing more and more definitely, we see more and more what it is a modification of, and what modification it is, *all* advance in conception is an advance in classification.

Definition seems at first sight very different from classification. A modern reader of Greek philosophy is struck by the prominent part played in it by ὁρισμός: for with us 'definition' has come to signify generally the more or less arbitrary fixing of the meaning of a word, so that ὁρισμός reminds us, for example, of the definitions of a dictionary-maker. We must banish this notion if we wish to understand what is meant by definition in the theory of science. To define is really to conceive or experience definitely; the expression in speech or writing is an after-thing. When we are told that Socrates spent his whole life in trying to define certain things, this seems to us absurd, because we take the word in an external and limited sense, whereas the effort of Socrates was to make himself and others realize fully and definitely the meaning of the experiences denoted by moral terms.

How do we define, in this sense? How do we realize the meaning of an idea or experience? The more we think of the experience, the more we find that it is a modification of some other experience, and what modification it is. This is an untechnical way of saying that definition is 'per genus et differentiam'; to be definitely conscious of anything you must see what modification it is of what more generic thing. Hence we see how near together classification and definition really are. We are often told that the ideal of ancient science was definition, while that of modern science is classification; but the essence of the two things is the same. Definition 'per genus et differentiam' assigns to a thing its position in a genus relatively to other things which are also modifications of the generic nature; and to do this is to classify the thing. It is quite true that a great deal of

what we call definition is not definition; it consists in substituting one word for another, moving about (so to say) the pieces on the board of cultivated people's minds. Hence the prejudice against 'definition.' But, in the proper sense of the word, our whole business in thinking may be said to be definition; for it consists in conceiving more and more definitely what we experience.

SECTION XI

EXTENSION AND INTENSION. THE GENERALITY OF CONCEPTS

I. *Extension and Intension of Concepts.*

THE content of a concept may be described equally well as the 'marks' or 'notes' by which it is known, or as the elements which are united in it. The sum of these elements or marks is sometimes called the intension or comprehension or connotation of the concept, and with this is contrasted its extension or denotation. Triangularity, for example, that which makes a triangle a triangle, that which would be verbally expressed in a perfect definition, is the meaning or intension of the concept triangle. Triangles, i. e. instances in which this is found, are said to be the extension of the concept.

It is common to say that the intension of a concept is the attributes connoted by the name, and the extension is the 'things' in which these attributes are found. But what is the sense of this antithesis? On what ground do I contrast triangularity with this, that, and the other triangle, calling the latter emphatically 'things' in contrast with the former? What constitutes the 'thing-hood' of the particular triangles? It is that in them which has nothing to do with triangularity, the mere circumstances of triangularity; for instance, the 'here-ness' of the particular triangle, or its woodenness, or brazenness. What we mean, then, by the 'things' in which triangularity is

found is a number of attributes[1] which are unessential to triangularity, though they are found united with it. '*A* triangle' is constituted by the fact of triangularity *plus* the facts of 'here-ness,' woodenness, and the like; and the extension of the concept triangle is its intension *plus* the consideration that this co-exists with a number of other intensions. But we must observe that, in this sense, the extension is just *not* the extension *of* the intension, for the intension is exactly the same, however many the instances of it; we call these 'things' particular triangles, but they are not particular *triangles*.

On the other hand, if we really mean by extension the extension *of* the concept, then intension and extension coincide. The fact of triangularity is not, and cannot be, separated from the various forms of isosceles, scalene, &c.; it is *in* them, just as life cannot be apart from, but is *in*, the various forms of life. We may, however, give a meaning to the distinction in the following way. We may, for convenience' sake, mentally hold apart a certain fraction of the fact; for instance, the minimum of meaning which justifies us in using the word 'triangularity.' We may call this the generic triangle, and distinguish it from particular forms of triangle. We may go on to say that the content of triangularity is less than that which is contained in all possible triangles; and we may call this content the intension of the concept triangle, and distinguish it from the extension. But in reality triangularity cannot be separated from its particular forms; and the intension of the concept, i.e. its full meaning, is therefore the same as its extension.

[1] That is, every such 'thing,' or element of the 'thing,' has in its turn intension, of whose extension triangularity is a part. Woodenness is the intension; the wooden thing is woodenness + triangularity + ...

II. *The Generality of Concepts.*

The discussion of extension and intension recalls the statement that general conceptions are got by abstraction from things—a statement in which 'things' is used in the same unsatisfactory way as in the extension and intension formula. That conceptions are got by abstraction merely means, in its simplest sense, that, as conscious experience is one and continuous, any particular bit of it, in order to be clearly realized, must be attended to exclusively; the act of attention, that is, implies an act of abstraction. Hence we are rightly told that the power to abstract is essential to thinking, that to 'think' a thing we must free ourselves from certain contexts in which it appears. But it is misleading to say, on the strength of this, that conceptions are abstracted from *things*; for this is apt to suggest that the 'things' from which the conceptions are abstracted have some other kind of reality than that which belongs to the conceptions abstracted from them; whereas in truth that from which we abstract in order to think clearly a given conception (say, that of triangle) consists of other actual or possible experiences or elements of consciousness. No doubt, if we like to give the name of 'thing' to any group of properties supposed to be coherent, there is no objection to saying that every property which is clearly conceived is abstracted from a thing; only we must be on our guard against the notion that the conception (the property clearly conceived) has one kind of reality, and the thing (the group of properties) another.

Again, we are told that a concept is general, but a thing (or existence) particular; and that general concepts are got by abstraction from particular things.

What, then, is the generality of a concept? A concept is general in so far as we are conscious of it as common to, shared in by, diverse elements—as entering into, and entered into by, other concepts. To conceive colour in general is to be conscious of a certain experience, and, in that act, to be conscious of it as capable of being experienced in a variety of forms, such as red, blue, green. When I conceive virtue in general, I am conscious of an excellence of a certain kind, which may assume and be present in various shapes. Taking the generality of a concept in this sense, we cannot properly say that the general concept is 'got by abstraction,' for the concept is not *made* general by being abstracted, its generality *means* its capability of being abstracted. Nor can we properly say that it is abstracted from particulars; for its generality does not exclude, but implies, particularity.

Consider, again, the meaning of the verb 'to generalize.' To generalize is to conceive something as general (in the sense explained); to conceive it as actually or possibly an identity in differences. It is to see mentally that 'this' is also true of 'that' and 'that' and 'that'; that this thing or experience would also be true under other circumstances. We talk of generalizing an experience, and this means seeing that we should have it under various conditions. In this sense of 'generalization' we could have no experience at all without generalizing. The simple judgment, 'this here and now is that there and then,' is an act of generalization. It implies that I am conscious of a certain identity which I carry on through the difference of time and place. I have in 'now' and 'then' two particulars of a general, and their identity; and this implies power to see through the

differences to the identity (power of 'abstraction'). Take, again, at the other end of the scale, a great act of scientific generalization. Newton, according to the story, generalized from a falling apple to a truth about motion. Supposing this to be so, it would mean that he mentally saw in the falling apple an element of identity with all moving bodies on the earth, and with all the bodies of the solar system. That is, he saw this identity through a mass of differences which to any ordinary mind would have been insuperable. But this act of generalization was in principle the same that a child performs in identifying any two things. The result of this act is a generality or general concept, and in this sense *all* concepts are general.

The concept of motion is general, not in the sense of being vague, but because it is conceived as realized in, or admitting of, many forms, applications, modes. Its generality (to repeat) does not exclude, but implies its particularity. The more we know about anything the more we generalize *and* particularize, and the widest generalization 'explains' the greatest number of particulars. The power to generalize implies *further*, and incidentally, the power to distinguish the fact from irrelevant conditions of experience, from things with which it is found, but which it is not; and the more we generalize, the greater is the number of these irrelevant things from which we abstract. It is these irrelevant conditions which are sometimes described as the 'particular things' from which a 'general concept is got by abstraction.' But it is essential to recognize clearly that *these* particulars are not the particulars *of* the general. You may call the falling apple a particular case of motion, but it is not the whole apple that is so; as falling it is so, but as rosy it

is a particular case of colour. It is perfectly true, however, that the power of thinking or generalizing implies not only the power of particularizing in the strict sense, but also the power of 'abstraction,' or of seeing the fact through the mass of circumstances, the so-called 'particulars,' with which it co-exists. The generality of truth, in this sense, means its independence of irrelevant conditions.

We may take as an illustration of what has been said the experience of heat. (1) Let us begin with an elementary form of this experience, the state in which we are conscious of 'feeling hot,' and are conscious of almost nothing besides. We should here know the minimum about heat. We should hardly have generalized heat at all; it would be nearly an isolated fact. And the proof of this is that an alteration of the circumstances would seriously modify our consciousness of heat. (2) Next let us take a stage at which we feel hot and refer the feeling to an object outside. Here we have a great advance. I am conscious of a certain identity (expressed by 'hot' or 'heat') in a context which includes my body and an external body. I have generalized heat more; and advance in the same direction might lead to the 'generalizations' that there is heat *wherever* there is fire, or alike where there is sunlight and where there is fire. And then (3) we may suppose that we have somehow found that heat goes with expansion. This would enable us to carry on heat into new and wider contexts, to connect the phenomenon with a great number of other phenomena, to pursue an identity through many more differences, to increase greatly the generality of heat.

From this point of view it is doubtless true that a concept, in advancing, gets further and further from

'sense.' In the case of heat, for example, at each step the particular circumstances of time and place become less and less important. The experience is more and more disengaged from the local and temporary circumstances in which it is embedded. The merest act of memory, in which an element is simply retained, is an act of disengagement from sense; and this disengagement from sense (in *this* meaning of the words[1]) goes on increasing in recollection and imagination and the further processes of thought. In *this* sense, again, but only in this sense, it is true that conceptions, as they become more true, become more abstract; that is, more independent of bodily, local, temporal conditions. And so, the better we understand anything, the less we need instances; and, the less we understand anything, the more we need them.

What are usually called 'general' ideas (often in a disparaging way) are just *not* true generalities. They are conceptions which are supposed to represent a certain definite identity in certain definite differences, but which really represent neither the one nor the other. They will not hold or apply in particular instances, just because they are not the generals *of* the particulars. If a man acts upon his 'general idea' of motion, in this sense, he may find that it is not true; but the reason is that it is not the true general idea of motion, for that carries with it the consciousness of its possible modifications. A mere 'general idea' of motion is usually a generalized image; that is, a congeries of certain pieces, often incongruous, of different moving objects with which the person is familiar, some of these pieces being irrelevant to the fact of motion. In like manner a

[1] [The parenthesis is doubtless meant to guard against the notion that the full conception would contain no reference to sensation. See pp. 186–7.]

'general idea' of human nature is often a mere congeries of elements abstracted from a few human beings. It is inevitable that such general ideas should fail when they are applied. So, again, what is commonly called generalizing means carrying a certain quality, perhaps quite superficial, into all kinds of new circumstances, where perhaps it does not apply at all, and then basing upon it all kinds of unjustifiable inferences. Thus the most ignorant are the rashest generalizers; and this is also true of classification and definition. It may almost be said that, the less we know of a thing, the readier we are to classify and define it. We all carry about with us a number of ready-made concepts, each of which gives the basis for generalization, classification, definition; and according to the greatness of our ignorance we need to restrain ourselves the more.

The polemic, then, against what are called 'general ideas' is valuable and true. But it is not the generality of a general idea that makes it vicious, but its imperfect generality, which is also imperfect particularity. Everybody, who thinks at all, generalizes; and all concepts are general. If 'general' means 'vague' and 'confused,' that is because the true generality of the concept is not realized.

Finally, when we say that all concepts are general, we must add that no concept is 'general' if this means that it is *not* individual. The most general concept in the world has its own unique individuality. Truth does not become less individual as it becomes more general. The individuality of a truth is proportionate to the clearness and fullness with which it is conceived; and every new application of it increases both its generality and its individuality.

NOTE A.

Experience[1].

Some light may be thrown upon discussions about an '*a priori* element in experience,' the 'derivation of knowledge from experience,' and the like, by considering one or two senses in which we use the word 'experience.'

1. We sometimes qualify the term by the adjective 'personal.' We say that we have a personal experience of a pain, or of a feeling of heat; we hear of a personal experience of 'salvation.' In such phrases 'experience' seems to mean whatever we refer to ourselves, whatever we are conscious of as happening to *us* or being done by *us*. . . . With this 'experience' in particular cases we contrast what we know about only through hearsay, or in theory, or the like. We say, for example, that we have some knowledge, through descriptions, of what is meant by an earthquake, though we have no experience of earthquakes. But it is evident that this distinction is not really one between experience and something of a different kind, but merely a distinction between different grades or strata of experience, between a fuller experience and a less full. What we experience through hearsay and the like, we still experience; it is something we are conscious of as happening to us.

For our present purpose we may evidently dismiss this use of the word. Knowledge *is* experience—the fullest experience of anything. There would be no meaning, therefore, in asking whether knowledge is derived from experience.

2. In the second place we contrast experience, in the sense of that which we *actually* know, with that which is merely

[1] [From the course given in October, 1887.]

possible; and we speak of the latter as being beyond, or outside, experience. We say, for instance, 'So far as experience goes, *A* or *B* is certain.' Experience, in this sense, means the sum of what is known, the best-established knowledge so far.

There can be no objection to this use of the term. Only we must observe that, wherever we take this 'experience,' we find that it points beyond itself, and suggests something which it is not as yet. Nor is it separate from the unknown which it suggests, or which we interpret it to mean. Thus it may be said with perfect truth that we are always in advance of our 'experience'; and that the progress of experience means that fresh interpretation, or analysis, or application, of experience by which suggested possibilities are confirmed or refuted [1].

From this point of view we may best understand what has been meant by references to an element in experience which is not itself matter of experience.

For example, the essence of Plato's doctrine of ἀνάμνησις (as found in the *Phaedo*) is that the soul is aware of something which it has never 'experienced.' We have the notion of equality, for example; we know what we mean by the word; and yet we have never seen perfectly equal things. The two things which we call equal are never really equal; they do but imperfectly realize, or partly exhibit, the idea of equality. So that our 'experience' of so-called equal things is at the same time a knowledge of an equality which is not in the things. We cannot therefore learn the idea of equality from our experience of things; we only 'recover' it, as Plato says; or, in other phraseology, the idea would seem to be an element in our experience which is not matter of 'experience,' in that sense of the word which we are considering at present.

From the same fundamental characteristic of our knowledge arises the difficulty discussed in the *Meno*. We advance in knowledge: we learn. Learning means coming to something which we do not yet know. But, if we do not know it, how can we look for it? Learning must be a coming of the soul to *itself*—a process never complete under human conditions.

In the same way, to Aristotle learning is the actualizing of something potential, a coming of the soul to itself which is at

[1] [Cf. ix. 2, Test of Truth, and Note C, p. 234.]

the same time a coming of it to things (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πώς ἐστι πάντα), for what is gradually actualized by us must be eternally actualized somewhere.

The doctrine of innate ideas, originated by Descartes and developed by his followers, was really an attempt to bring out the same fact. It did not imply that people are born in possession of fully developed ideas and ultimate truths. It meant that the very fact of our getting these ideas implies an activity which is not derivable from anything else, and which is always in advance of its experience.

Kant's doctrine of *a priori* forms of perception and understanding is substantially the same idea. The real point of the phrase *a priori* is that the modes of our experience, the ways in which we experience what we do experience, are always in advance of what at any given moment we *have* experienced.

The truth pointed to by such theories as these, and by the misleading phrase about an element in experience which is not given by experience, is that all experience is a double fact. In experiencing anything, we are aware that we do not experience the whole of what we say we experience. In other words, experience itself, the concrete fact, is the union of two distinguishable but inseparable elements, actual and possible. It is a γιγνόμενον, a coming to be. One ought not, in strictness, to say that experience *suggests* something beyond itself, for experience *is* the suggestion of something by something which is not yet it; just as any growing thing does not merely suggest something beyond itself, but *is* at any moment beyond itself.

For example, we say that we have experience of causal connexion; but we never experience all that we mean by causal connexion. We never find a case where it is quite true that two things are absolutely and necessarily implied in each other, for we can never exclude the possibility of some unknown element. Causation remains an idea not fully realized in experience, though it is of the essence of experience; and it is just this that makes science advance.

3. If we still ask whether knowledge is derived from experience, we are probably meaning by 'experience' what is really simply a very elementary experience. We are taking a certain layer of experience and giving it the privilege of being called experience *par excellence*. But there is no reason for such a use of the term.

NOTE B.

Certitude, Law, Necessity, Uniformity[1].

The progress of knowledge consists in the widening of elementary experiences of substance and cause. Suppose, for example, a simple sensation of colour, red. The least I could say about it would be a judgment expressing the fact that when I saw it I recognized it. The amount of certitude here, the amount that I am certain of, is very small: how does it grow? Suppose I say, 'Red is a sensation,' meaning by 'sensation' at least something that I experience through my ears, eyes, &c. I have now established a connexion between red and certain other experiences, which modifies my knowledge both of it and of them. If I then say, 'Red is a colour,' I have connected it with other colours. If I say, 'Red is a modification of light,' or 'Red enters into this or that artistic effect,' I have connected it with an immense number of other things in my experience. Something of this kind is what is continually happening as knowledge grows. When we find an element in different contexts, it acquires new meanings for itself, and it gives new meanings to the elements in these contexts. The element remains in a sense the same, for it is clearly essential that I should be able to recognize it when I have it again; but it is also continually changing with every new connexion into which it is brought. The progress of knowledge may therefore be represented as the pursuing of identities through ever-increasing differences. And just as the 'substance' red remains the same, and yet changes and increases, so do also the 'cause' and 'effect' red. The more I know of the connexions of red with other elements, the more I know of its causes and effects; and the progress of knowledge is therefore a progress in the perception of the coherence of things.

At each step in the expansion of experience we put a new interpretation on old data. It is quite true that we constantly

[1] [This passage, condensed from the lectures of October, 1886, follows an account (similar to that on pp. 175 f.) of the *minimum cognoscibile* as expressed in the judgment, 'This is this, not that,' or, 'This is that as well as this.' The self-identity and relation to other implied here were pointed to as the germs of the conceptions of substance and cause.]

'test' our inferences by going back to the original fact. But what this means is that we ascertain whether we have really got the original fact *A*—e. g. the sensation 'red'—in the new context to which it gives, and from which it receives, a new meaning. Our 'going back' does not mean that we *simply* repeat the original experience, or that this contained in it our later experience ; but at each step the ultimate ground of certitude is the identity of the phenomenon with itself: i. e. we argue, 'If this is *really* a case of *A*, then *B* is true of it.'

The expression of *A*'s nature we call its *laws*. A *universal law* about *A* means, what is true of *A* as *A*, neither more nor less. It means that wherever *A* is found, and under whatever circumstances, *A* will behave in such and such a way. The universality of a law does *not* mean that the law 'holds' in an enormous number of cases, or wherever we have observed *A* ; its universality depends not on the number of cases in which we have observed *A*, but on the degree to which we are able to be sure that we *have* observed *A*, and nothing but *A*, in those cases. And the impossibility of 'absolute certitude' is due to the impossibility of absolutely isolating any element from the rest of the world.

Hence arises the contrast between *theoretical* and *actual certitude*, laws and facts. The law says, Wherever *A* is found, it will behave in such and such a way. The difficulty is to be sure that we have found *A*, neither more nor less. Hence *any* actual phenomenon, however simple it appears, presents an insoluble problem if we pursue it far enough ; for to isolate *A* absolutely would mean that we knew fully, not only *A*, but the whole context of which it is a part. Hence also all scientific truth is 'abstract' or fragmentary ; or, that of which we are certain is always a very limited part of what we have experienced. It is a certain truth that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, but any 'actual' triangle is partly triangle and partly something else. The practical application of the law is therefore modified. We may say that, of the two ultimate sceptical questions, one, 'Is a triangle really a triangle?' is no *question*, it is nonsense ; the other, 'Is *this* triangle really a triangle?' is *always* a question.

The great difference between the sciences with regard to certitude depends on the comparative simplicity or complexity of their subject-matter. The simpler the conditions in any

matter, the surer we can be that we know what we have got, and nothing more nor less. The mathematical sciences are peculiarly exact, because the experiences called numerical and spatial are very simple (so that, if we had no others, we should know very little of the world). Sociology is as yet no science, because the simplest object here involves so many conditions. The exactness of a science depends on its abstractness, i. e. on the number of conditions it is able to ignore.

The degrees of *necessity* correspond to the degrees of certitude. To say that logical necessity is higher than mathematical, and mathematical than physical, does not mean that one kind of existence is more 'subject to law' than another. Mathematics has a high degree of necessity because, its subject-matter being very simple, it is comparatively easy to see how one thing involves another. Logical necessity is higher because, for example, the experience expressed by the law of contradiction is still more simple and elementary. A *contingent* truth, again, does not mean a truth about something not subject to law, but a truth about something comparatively little known. 'Contingency' means dependence on conditions over and above the known conditions. 'Chance' is a high degree of contingency. 'Necessity' means that there is no such dependence, —that the conditions are exhausted. The statement that 'all certitude is hypothetical' is true if it means that all certitude is dependent upon our knowing the conditions of the problem in question; i.e., *if* we are justified in saying that we have exhausted the conditions, the thing is certain.

The principle of the *uniformity of nature* (which does not mean that the future will resemble the past) is a particular application of the logical principle of identity. It is implied as soon as anything is experienced as the same under different conditions, and it means that the same thing under the same conditions will always behave in the same way. The question 'How far does this uniformity reach?' does not mean, 'How many things are capricious?' but, 'How much of the world is not merely theoretically (in anticipation) but actually (in experience) uniform?' or, 'Over how much of the world are we able to realize uniformity?' The Greeks recognized the principle, but were able to realize it only over a comparatively narrow field; and there are still enormous tracts over which we cannot realize it. But the imperfection of our knowledge does

not, as people say, leave a loophole for 'chance' or the 'miraculous.' These words ought merely to mean, 'what we cannot yet explain.'

NOTE C.

Subjective and Objective[1].

The antithesis of subjective and objective elements in experience or knowledge has various senses.

1. 'Subjective' denotes all the elements in 'me' and 'you' *except* the knowledge itself; e. g. our feelings about it, and our ways of reaching it, are 'subjective.' 'It' is independent of these elements; and it is for this reason that they are 'subjective,' and not because they are present in subjects. 'It,' the fact, is for us, for subjects; to know it is to 'make it our own'; and when we are in the most perfect state of intelligence the distinction between 'us' and 'it' disappears, just as in a perfect sympathy or 'understanding' two persons become one. 'Subjective,' then, in this sense means everything up to the point of intelligence.

2. 'Subjective' denotes part of the fact as contrasted with the whole: e. g. a subjective visual experience is one in which the whole fact of sight is not present; certain conditions are absent. If these conditions are judged to be present, there is 'illusion'; i. e. misinterpretation. In such a case the *absent* conditions *alone* are sometimes called 'objective.' *What* these particular conditions are, depends on the person who is speaking: one means solidity, another physiological concomitants, another conformity to some law or principle, and so on. That is, there is in each case a certain form of existence which has a 'prerogative' of objectivity or reality; and the question to be asked always is, What are the characteristics, or tests, of that particular form of being? It is in this connexion that so many people identify 'objective' with what they call 'external' reality; but of course the objective is no more outside the

[1] [The following is an abstract of the lectures on this subject given in October, 1886. It covers nearly the same ground as Section IX. printed above. Much is omitted as needless to the reader of that section, but what is given is almost entirely in the words of Nettleship's notes, or of the reports of the lectures.]

mind than the subjective; we *understand* the objective conditions of sensation as well as the sensation itself.

So far, 'subjective' and 'objective' denote different sets of elements in experience, of which the second are understood to be the more important or universal. They are not correlative; they co-exist, but they *may* exist separately.

3. We now come, however, to a third distinction, and in this the two terms subjective and objective, or subject and object, are strictly correlative. And this distinction, which amounts to saying that *all* experience is presented (*objectum*), is one inherent in consciousness.

This distinction is one particular form of a universal law or principle, which may be called the principle of relativity. That principle holds good for all being whatever: in self-consciousness[1] it assumes a special form, that in which the related elements are self or subject, and not-self or object.

The fact of relativity means that everything is what it is through its relation to other things; or that, as Plato says, being implies not-being or 'otherness.' For example, every *number* is one of a series, and its nature or meaning is determined by its place in the series, i. e. ultimately by all the other numbers (and so with any series). Any *figure*, or piece of space, is determined by the surrounding spaces. So with *force*; there is no action without re-action; the fact may be analyzed into these two, but they are not separable. Again, the attributes of a *thing* are its modes of acting on, and being acted on by, other things; and you cannot separate the thing from them; if you try to, you leave nothing. Then we come to the mode of existence called *consciousness* (in the widest sense[2]); we find that, as we say, certain bodies feel. Here again every feeling is determined, either by other definite feelings, or by the general surrounding medium of feeling. Lastly, in *self-consciousness*, the related elements are self and not-self, or subject and object.

Here then the object *in general* is the 'other' of self, but its special meaning will depend on the special kind of self, and will differ according as the self is, for example, sensitive, perceptive, intelligent, appetitive, willing. And the distinction of

[1] [Apparently = 'consciousness' in the preceding paragraph.]

[2] [A wider sense than that of 'consciousness' in the last paragraph but one.]

self and other is perpetually being done away with, and perpetually reappearing. Thus (*a*) in *desire* we have to distinguish between the desiring subject and the desired object. But each *is* only in relation to the other; the object is an object only so far as desired, the subject a subject only so far as it conceives of itself as possibly obtaining the object. And in the attainment of desire, when the distinction disappears or becomes implicit, the object, which is *self*-satisfaction, ceases to be an 'other,' and the subject, which goes out of itself in desiring, identifies itself with the object. So again (*b*) in *sympathy* a person is said to feel himself one with another, or the sense of separation is said to disappear; and what is implied in these phrases is that the concrete fact, analyzable into two selves, is really the unity of the two. And so (*c*) with *knowledge*. In all perceptive consciousness there is one fact analyzable into two aspects. We can only separate subject and object in this sense if we mean by subject the *possible* percipient, and by object the *possible* perceivable; and we must do so, because we are aware that our knowledge is imperfect. In truth the distinction disappears (so that truth may be described indifferently as an object or a subject), but it disappears only to re-appear. Finally, pursuing the enquiry, we come to the proposition that 'in the absolute all distinction between subject and object vanishes.' That is, if we start with the idea that everything *is* in relation to another, and follow this out to the whole of being, we see that, if the 'thing' were *fully* determined, its relativity would cease. The sum of relativities would be that which has no 'other' beyond it, or is self-related. Hence Aristotle's description of the divine mind, the ideal of knowledge, as thought which is its own object (*νόησις νοήσεως*).

[Then follows the illustration of the 'table' and 'I,' to show how the meanings of 'object' and 'subject' vary together. See p. 200 f.]

The 'relativity' of which the correlation of subject and object is one form is not to be confused with the 'relativity of knowledge,' as expressed in such a phrase as, 'we only know phenomena.' Such a phrase may point to a truth, but it is most misleading. Taken strictly, it must mean either (*a*) that all we call truth is mere appearance or illusion; but in that case it is *we* who draw the distinction of apparent and real, and we are using our knowledge of the real in asserting that we have no

knowledge of the real. Or (*b*) it means that all knowledge is analyzable into a presented (τὸ φαινόμενον) and something to which it is presented (ᾧ φαίνεται) ; i. e. all knowledge is a form of self-consciousness. But generally the phrase in question conveys in a confused way two notions, (*a*) that all our knowledge is limited, has a 'beyond'; (*b*) that this 'beyond,' the ideal of truth, though unknowable, is more real than anything which we know. 'Unknowable' here must mean, not 'unintelligible,' but that 'beyond' of our present knowledge which implies a subject beyond our present subject. All knowledge involves the consciousness of an unknown in this sense ; this consciousness is the other side of knowledge, and the two are inseparable.

It is often said that in Greek philosophy the problem of knowledge is regarded objectively, and in modern philosophy subjectively. There is only a partial truth in this statement. In the analysis of perception or thought the Greeks started from the side of the object, the αἰσθητόν or νοητόν : but they regarded the object as strictly correlative to a subject. The distinction of subject and object, which is said to be absent from Greek philosophy, appears without a name in the *De Anima*, where the process of knowledge is described as a gradual appropriation of the world by the human soul, or as the gradual development of the human soul, from a possible to an actual state of knowledge, under the influence of the world. That is, the distinction appears here as that of the potentially intelligent and the actually intelligible ; and the subject is said to be in a sense the object (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πώς ἐστι πάντα) : i. e. in the act of knowledge the distinction ceases to exist, or becomes that of the concave and convex sides of a curve. Conversely, while it is true that conspicuous modern philosophers have started from the side of the subject, and have regarded the conditions of experience as expressions of the self or Ego, it must be remembered that this subject, self, or Ego has been to them that to which the world is an object, or that which some call the universal subject. It is not true that in modern philosophy the sense of the objectivity of the world has decreased ; it has grown enormously, so that we even tend to say that the Greeks had no sense of the uniformity of nature. In modern philosophy, again, as in Greek, we have the idea of something in which the distinction disappears ; and in each it is expressed by a personal term, νοῦς, or the subject which has itself for object.

PLATO'S CONCEPTION OF GOODNESS AND THE GOOD

PLATO'S CONCEPTION OF GOODNESS AND THE GOOD

[In the Biographical Sketch some account is given of the book on Plato which Nettleship engaged to write for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The following Essay is one of the five chapters into which, according to his original plan, the book was to be divided. It was composed about the year 1881 or 1882. When it became evident that the chapter was much too long for the proposed scale of the volume he began to cut it down, and in the end it would probably have been reduced to less than a half of its original length. Considering the reason of these excisions, it has seemed best to restore almost all the excised passages. A few corrections have also been made, some references have been added, and some of the paragraphs have been divided. Otherwise the Essay is printed as the author left it.

In the opening paragraph, as originally written, the more specifically ethical of Plato's writings were divided into two groups, according as they deal mainly with the nature of goodness, or with the nature of the good or the end of life; although, it was remarked, these two subjects touch at many points and ultimately unite. To the first group were assigned the *Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Laches*,

Charmides, and *Euthydemus*; to the second the *Gorgias*, *Philebus*, and *Republic*; and these are the dialogues discussed in the Essay. In revising it the author determined to prefix a 'general account of Plato's ideas about morality.' The first paragraph, as it now stands, is evidently a mere list of headings for this 'general account,' which does not appear to have been written.]

SOME of the characteristic ideas of Plato's moral philosophy may be stated in the following propositions:—

(1) Goodness is a state of soul, or of the inner man: it means good life.

(2) To live well is to live for the right end: the soul is its own end: the end of life is to live well: the best life is that in which the soul is at its best.

(3) The condition of living well is clear insight into what the good of the soul means and requires. It is best to have this insight oneself; next best, to follow or be ruled by some one else who has it.

(4) The soul of man is so constituted that he can only live well in community with other souls. The perfect life would be a life of perfect communion with other souls and with the soul which animates the universe.

These ideas are seldom entirely absent from any of the ethical dialogues, but they are present in very different proportions, and are developed with different degrees of emphasis. They are moreover usually developed in contrast with other prevalent ideas which to Plato seemed mistaken; the idea, for instance, that virtue

is an external accomplishment, the idea that the end of life is an external possession, the idea that living well is a matter of chance or inspiration or custom, or the idea that individual self-assertion is the glory of life.

Thus Plato's enquiries are concerned with two main objects. The first is to show what the best life *is*; that is to say, what is its true essence and definition, irrespectively of the tendencies in actual human nature which prevent or impede its attainment. This is a question for logical analysis. The second is to show how, human nature being what it is, that life is to be attained. This is a question of social and political construction.

Any critical enquiry into the nature of moral qualities or principles must be primarily an enquiry into the meaning of certain words and phrases. Every civilized society has a current phraseology, in which its feelings about right and wrong, about what it admires and what it dislikes, are embodied. Under the apparent fixity of this current language is concealed an indefinite variety and inconsistency of meaning, according to the character, education, and circumstances of those who employ it. Such a fluid mass of opinion, solidified at the surface into words, was the material with which Plato started in his ethical enquiries; and the questions with which at various points he probed the mind of Greek society were practically two: What do you really mean by this or that expression? and, What do you think you ought to mean by it?

The Greek word ἀρετή, the most comprehensive term for admirable qualities of character, is usually rendered by 'virtue.' It is unfortunate that the English word has undergone the process of attenuation and decay, so

familiar in the history of language, by which any special meaning which it had has shrunk into equivalence with chastity, while the general approbation which it expresses has evaporated into a praise so faint that it almost damns. Under these circumstances, 'goodness' is often a better translation of ἀρετή: for we too can speak of a good dog or a good ship, a good painter or a good citizen, a good friend or a good man, with many various shades of meaning, but with the common implication that the object which we call 'good' has an intrinsic worth, and that we admire it. The Greek word ἀρετή has at least as wide a range, and as welcome associations; the English word 'virtue' has neither the one nor the other.

The difficulty felt, in rendering the Greek term for excellence of character in general, is increased when we come to specific forms of excellence. We still sum up our admiration of a man in the word 'good,' but we do not so naturally speak of the 'justice,' the 'temperance,' the 'wisdom,' the 'piety,' or even the 'courage,' of our friends, when we wish to note the qualities which most strike or attract us. We use the words, indeed, but in senses sometimes more narrow or more shallow, sometimes more emphatic or more remote, than the Greeks of Plato's time, seldom with the same associations or under the same circumstances. Their place has been taken by a new list, of mixed extraction, Jewish, Greek, Latin, and Teutonic. Humility and purity, duty and honour, Christian and gentleman, honesty and consistency—such are some of the words which a modern Plato would have to examine if he wished to sift the moral consciousness of English society.

The above reflexion upon the greater comprehensive-

ness, and, if we may say so, 'solidarity,' of the Greek conception of virtue suggests another which is of equal importance for the understanding of Plato. It has become a commonplace of modern criticism that the Greeks 'confounded ethics and politics.' The remark expresses about as much of the truth as would be expressed by saying that to the modern world the ideas of legal, moral, and religious obligation are absolutely separate. It is doubtless true that, so far as there has been progress in the theory of human conduct, it has been marked by growing 'differentiation' of ideas; but the progress has not been progress unless it has also brought with it a corresponding 'integration.' The synthesis which the rudimentary organization of Greek life made comparatively easy now requires a grasp and a penetration of mind as much greater as a modern nation is greater than a Greek town. But it has equally to be made, and we have only to look below the surface to see that modern thought is in labour with its execution.

Plato's method of examining the moral ideas which he found in vogue may be described as that of making the ideas criticize themselves. This he does by pressing them to their logical consequences, by assuming given words to have at least some definite moral meaning, and by asking what follows if that meaning be strictly adhered to. The ultimate appeal is to the conscience of ordinary people; if you grant that one thing is better than another, if you recognize a distinction between something right and something wrong, if you feel this conduct to be admirable and that repulsive, then you must also grant that such and such is an inadequate or false or confused account of what is good, right, or admirable.

This is the critical side of the enquiry. But the enquiry is not only critical; it is conducted, as all such enquiries must be, in tacit accordance with certain positive and constructive ideas in the mind of the writer, which, though often indicated rather than expressed, grow increasingly clear and prominent with the growth of his own moral experience and purpose.

In asking, What *is* virtue? or, What *is* this or that virtue? Plato was asking for a definition; and the significance of the question depends first upon the formal requirements which he expected the definition to satisfy —in a word, on the import which he attached to 'is.' This import will best be brought out by considering what kind of answers he thought formally or logically unsatisfactory, and on what grounds. The tolerably well-defined group of such answers which we meet with in the dialogues called *Protagoras*, *Meno*, *Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Euthydemus*, represents a comparatively rudimentary stage of experience and reflexion. They are put in the mouths of a brave but uncultivated soldier, an honest but ignorant and pretentious prophet, an indolently curious young nobleman, a modest and ingenuous schoolboy. That which naturally occurs first to an unreflecting mind, when asked to give an account of its morality, is to mention some obvious instance of what it considers to be moral. The soldier, asked what courage is, replies, 'Not to run away in battle'; but it is easily shown that it may be an act of courage to run away as one fights (like the Scythians), or to run away in order to fight at an advantage (as the Lacedaemonians at Plataea); so that running away and not running away are not, in themselves, of the essence of courage. A similar criticism applies if, substituting for a single act or circumstance

a single general quality, we define courage as 'endurance,' or temperance as 'quietness in behaviour'; for by courage and temperance we mean something admirable, and there are many cases in which to yield is more admirable than to endure, and where quickness and energy are more admirable than quietness.

A second and equally common form in which we hold and express our moral conceptions is illustrated by Meno, when to the question, What is virtue? he answers, 'Virtue in a man is to be able in the conduct of public affairs, virtue in a woman is to manage her house well and obey her husband; and so on with the various actions and times of life—there is a virtue proper to each.' This, as Socrates objects, is to tell us, not what virtue is, but how it differs in different circumstances. If we want to know what a bee is, it is of no use to be told that there are all sorts of bees; one bee may be bigger or handsomer than another, but, in so far as they are all bees, they are all the same. A strong or a healthy man is different from a strong or a healthy woman, but strength is strength, and health is health, wherever they are found. What we want to know is, what makes virtue to be virtue and nothing else.

A third error to which in our ordinary state of mind we are liable is that of confusing a principle with its results or accidents, as when, for instance, we define holiness as 'that which the gods love'; for, though this may be true of holiness, it appears that it is not the being loved by the gods which makes holiness holy, but the fact of its being holiness which makes them love it. This is part of the general principle that, whenever a thing takes place or is affected in a certain way, the cause is found, not in the fact of its so taking place or

being affected, but in its own quality or nature. Such a definition of holiness, then, does not give us what holiness *is*, but what happens to it.

These instances will be enough to show what Plato was looking for when he asked the question, What is goodness? He was looking for something which should be, not good at one time or place and bad at another, but good under all circumstances; for something which should be realized by the mind, not as a disconnected series of different instances, but as something one and the same, pervading them all; for something which should be the centre and source of its attributes, not one possible attribute amongst many. He has various ways of describing this something: it is the 'being' or 'essence' or 'what is,' as contrasted with the 'affection' or 'what happens to it'[1]: it is 'that in which all cases of it are the same,' or 'that which remains the same with itself in all,' as contrasted with that in which they differ[2]: it is that which 'makes them all to be what they are,' and it is the 'pattern' or type to which we must refer in judging of them ourselves or in explaining their nature to others[3]. The one term which he chose to express these various conceptions, the term which more than any other has become associated with his name, was 'idea,' a Greek word which has been naturalized in English, and of which the literal meaning is 'form.' The fuller consideration of Plato's use of this word is best combined with that of his theory of knowledge[4]; it is enough here to note that from an apparently early period he appro-

[1] *Euthyphro*, 11 A.

[2] *Meno*, 72 C; *Euthyphro*, 5 D; *Laches*, 191 E.

[3] *Meno*, 72 C; *Euthyphro*, 6 E.

[4] [On which a chapter was to have been written. On the meaning of idea' in Plato see *Hellenica*, pp. 146–7, and vol. ii.]

priated it to express the substance of morality, understanding by the 'form' of virtue that which is essential, identical, and typical in our moral principles, that which we really mean, believe in, and have in our minds' eye, when we express those principles in words.

From the above instances we also see what Plato regarded as the defect or weakness in the moral conceptions which they illustrate. The defect is twofold; either they confound the moral attributes in question with other attributes, which, though they accompany them in experience, have nothing to do with their morality; or they mistake the moral principle itself for the transitory conditions under which it is manifested. The corrective to the former is found in the habit of clear thinking, in the power to see and pursue a single thread of meaning through the tangled maze of circumstances, to keep in the mind the thing, the whole thing, and nothing but the thing, which we are considering. The latter defect implies a failure to realize what is involved in a moral principle, namely, that, though it can only be exemplified in a series of particular cases, it cannot be identified with any or all of its cases, except by surrendering its claim to be a principle at all.

From these imperfect and rudimentary conceptions of goodness we now pass to a more advanced and ambitious level of thought, of which the exponents are men like the cultivated general Nicias or the literary statesman Critias, Protagoras the great sophist, or even Socrates himself. The theories of morality put into the mouths of these speakers, differing as they do in details and in the criticism to which they are subjected, agree in this, that they make virtue, in some sense and to some degree, a matter of knowledge. It is in connexion with this

view that three cognate questions come into prominence: (1) How is virtue produced? for if it is knowledge it seems to follow that it must admit of being explained, understood, communicated—in a word, taught; (2) How are the different specific virtues related to each other and to virtue as a whole? for, if there is no goodness without knowledge, the different kinds of goodness must be in some sense one; (3) What is the object of the knowledge which is the condition of goodness? for, whatever analogy it may have to various branches of knowledge ordinarily so called, it is clearly not identical with any one or with all of them.

The insistence upon knowledge as the condition of morality was not peculiar to Plato, or even to Socrates, with whom it is generally associated. Education, understood in its widest sense, so as to include all that we mean by the diffusing of ideas, was an object of the keenest interest in Greek society at this time. It meant indeed very different things to different minds. With representatives of culture and enlightenment the question was, how the new ideas of advancing civilization could be best communicated to the rising generation; the politicians and men of business cared mainly to know how their sons could be fitted for public life or private enterprise; while the friends of the good old times, or the critics of modern degeneracy, were asking anxiously how the youth might be made upright and gentlemanly, or how the decay of native genius and virtue might be met by better methods and greater application. The supply of instruction was as various as the demand, and ranged from manual accomplishments to the whole duty of a householder and a citizen. 'Love of wisdom' or 'philosophy' was the term in vogue for almost any sort

of higher intellectual interest, any desire for information or attainments above the ordinary traditional level. The 'masters of wisdom' or 'sophists' were the persons who made it their business to provide for the satisfaction of the general want. To 'be wise' and to 'make wise,' wise in literature, science, and art, wise in domestic and social life, wise in war, in law, in politics, these were the dominant ambitions of the rising generation and their teachers in Athens at the end of the fifth century B. C.[1] And, when to this special demand for culture and accomplishments, whether as an ornament or as a practical engine of success, we add the general intellectual endowment of the Greek race, it is easy to understand how a theory which made morality a kind of knowledge should find a soil to spring from and an atmosphere to grow in. To a people which brought artistic and scientific faculties to bear so conspicuously, not only upon art and science proper, but upon every branch of life, it was natural that the cunning of the craftsman should furnish the typical illustration of the practical importance of knowledge. Nobody could help seeing that a musician, a surgeon, or a shoemaker must understand his profession if he would succeed in it: why should a man expect to succeed any more as a general, a statesman, a master of a house, unless he has acquired the theory of his business? And, if the former crafts can be taught and learnt, why not the latter?

Socrates, then, was on common ground with the ordinary intelligence of his age when he asserted that the general management of ourselves and our lives, in which morality consists, implies knowledge, study, skill,

[1] For illustrations in Plato see *Laches*, 179 B–D; *Euthydemus*, 306 D, ff.; *Protagoras*, 310 A, ff.

in other words a theory and a principle, just as much as the management of any particular branch of life. Where he went beyond and offended public opinion, enlightened as well as unenlightened, was in putting a more ideal construction upon a requirement which, up to a certain point and in a certain sense, every one admitted. The conception of knowledge which he tried to awaken was not only that of a practical mastery in one's business, nor did it merely mean seeing the nature and bearing of a principle of conduct as clearly and certainly as those of a technical or scientific principle; it required, besides and before these, that self-knowledge which is the knowledge of our own ignorance, and which is at once the spur to moral progress and the evidence of the inexhaustibility of moral truth. This conception Plato embraced and assimilated in all, and more than all, its original significance; and the synthetic tendency of his mind naturally led him to seek a systematic expression for what Socrates had put forth as occasion served or required. But, in his first attempts to define the knowledge upon which he, with his master, believed human goodness and well-being to depend, he was as much concerned to see what it was not, and how it differed from other kinds of knowledge, as to see what it was and how it resembled them. And thus in the dialogues with which we are now dealing, while the idea of a life according to knowledge is perpetually recurring, and is indeed the idea which dominates them all, we find ourselves being reminded scarcely less often of the difficulties which the idea involves, and are sometimes almost encouraged to question its tenability.

The points which Plato urges in his criticism fall mainly under two heads. Firstly, if morality has prin-

ciples and can be taught, it must be morality of a different kind from anything now to be found either in society at large or in its professed leaders and teachers, for that certainly is not based upon principles. Secondly, if the good of man depends upon knowledge, it must be knowledge of a different kind from any of the existing arts and sciences, for no amount of knowledge such as they convey will necessarily make human life better. As regards the first point[1], we are forcibly reminded how much of Plato's philosophy was developed by antagonism. A true disciple of Socrates in his thirst for truth and his impatience of half-truths, he must have welcomed eagerly the new lights which had risen or were rising upon his intellectual horizon. 'If happiness means the dealing rightly with circumstances, and if it is knowledge which enables us to do this, surely every man ought to set to work in every possible way to make himself as wise as he can.'[2] And yet almost in the same breath we find him doubting whether it is possible to be 'made wise,' whether wisdom can be 'learnt' at all; and, when the professors of wisdom or their disciples come forward with offers to teach it, he receives them with doubt, criticism, or contemptuous irony. It would seem, indeed, that the word 'wisdom' was as much a bone of contention in Plato's time as 'culture' is in our own. Genuine scientific attainments, and pretentious sciolism; speculative interest in language and thought, and mercenary juggling with words; honest search for deeper moral principles, and rules of thumb for getting on in life, such were some of the diverse elements covered

[1] [The reader will see that the *Protagoras* and the *Meno* are considered under the first head, the *Laches* and the *Charmides* under the second.]

[2] *Euthydemus*, 282 A.

by the common title 'love of wisdom' or 'philosophy.' Plato's conception of what philosophy ought to mean developed gradually, and in its earlier stages we can gather it mainly from his criticism of rival claimants to the title. He found men professing to be in advance of ordinary views of life, professing to have a real theory of conduct and to teach men how to live; and yet, when he interrogated their theories, he found in them little more depth, little more unity, little more consistency, than in the popular opinion which they claimed to enlighten. But it was not only with the professed representatives of enlightenment that Plato felt himself in antagonism. He, like them, demanded more light; he, like them, started with criticism of commonly received ideas; the difference was that his light was more intense and searching than theirs, his criticism more subtle and more uncompromising. And so, like some other philosophers, he found himself the enemy, not only of the men of ideas, of culture, and of science, but also of the professional men and practical politicians. The latter class probably regarded him as a variety of the former, that specially dangerous variety to which philosophical radicals and conservative free-thinkers are supposed to belong. The former probably interpreted his unsectarianism as trimming, while they hated his *hauteur* and winced under his sarcasm. In the two dialogues called *Protagoras* and *Meno*, which in whole or in part we have now to consider, this double-faced antagonism, the antagonism to society at large and the antagonism to its accredited leaders, begins to show itself.

Protagoras.

The *Protagoras* is a humorous apotheosis of the sophists. In Athens, 'the hearth and home of wisdom,'

in the house of the Athenian who has spent more money upon wisdom than any other living man, the wisest of the Greeks are met together, Hippias, Prodicus, and, greatest of all, Protagoras. Each of the distinguished strangers has brought his circle of admirers; the *élite* of Athenian society also is there; the whole house is possessed with culture, and the porter has lost his temper at the number of callers. Round a bed extemporized in the counting-house Prodicus is holding a literary *séance*; in one of the vestibules Hippias is lecturing on physics and astronomy; in another, Protagoras walks up and down discoursing to a chorus of disciples, who follow the movements of their master with a reverential dexterity which Socrates cannot sufficiently admire[1]. He has called to introduce his young friend Hippocrates to the great sophist; the youth had come to wake him before it was light with the news that Protagoras was in Athens; so eager is he to be made wise[2]. Protagoras receives them with the air of a man who is conscious of having been a leader of thought for forty years. Unlike some members of his profession, he is not ashamed of being a sophist, though fully aware of the invidiousness of the title. He knows that many other men distinguished in letters, art, and science, who are practically sophists, have tried to veil the fact for fear of what the political world might think of them; but they are always found out sooner or later, and the best policy is to be quite outspoken: as to the opinion of the general public, he makes no account of that; the general public takes its cue from its leaders[3]. Such is the tone of the great teacher.

[1] *Protag.* 314 C–316 A, 337 D; cp. *Apol.* 20 A.
[2] *Protag.* 309 A–314 C.
[3] *Ib.* 316 B–317 C; cp. 353 A–B.

In the manner in which Socrates is made to behave to him there is the deference of a younger to an older and more distinguished man, touched with the irony of one who has seen through and beyond him. The discussion is conducted without bitterness, and the two disputants part with expressions of mutual respect.

Protagoras undertakes to teach a young man, who wishes to become distinguished, 'how best to manage his own affairs, and how to speak and act with the greatest effect in public life'—in a word, to teach 'the art of politics' and to 'make a man a good citizen.' But can these things be taught? Socrates is inclined to doubt it, and public opinion seems to go with him; for in the popular assembly at Athens, when any technical question arises, about building, for instance, or ships, nobody is listened to but the architects and shipwrights; but on a political question any one who likes may get up and speak, and no one asks where he got his knowledge. The Athenian people, then, at any rate, do not consider that politics can be taught or learnt. And apparently the great statesmen themselves feel the same; for, though they get their children taught everything for which they can find a master, they do not teach them their own virtue of statesmanship[1].

Protagoras does not agree that these facts prove, either that political virtue cannot be taught, or that it is not taught. For, firstly, the art of good citizenship is not, like other arts, the property of a few professional men; it is present, and is assumed to be present, in a greater or less degree in everybody who is capable of living in a civilized community. This explains and justifies the conduct of the public assembly. Secondly, the fact that

[1] *Protag.* 317 E-320 B.

society punishes us for doing wrong shows that it regards morality, not as a gift of chance or nature, but as a thing which can be acquired and learnt; for the true purpose of punishment is not to avenge what is past, but to deter for the future. Thirdly, so far from morality not being taught as a matter of fact, we are learning it all our lives. The lesson begins with our nurses and parents; it goes on at school, where even more attention is given to discipline than to accomplishments, and where the poetry and music taught are specially selected with the view of inculcating virtue; and, when we leave school, the state takes us in hand, and makes us learn the laws and live by them, and if we transgress them it punishes us. What is all this but teaching virtue? Lastly, we need not wonder if the sons of great and good men are not always great and good. Every civilized man has some morality (a great deal, indeed, if you compare him with a savage); it is like speaking our own language; we think that nobody learns or teaches it, just because to a certain extent everybody does so; but some people are born with better natural capacities than others, and some people (Protagoras himself, for instance) are better teachers than others [1].

Such is the position of the professed instructor of public opinion, as regards the nature of his instruction. It is really the position of public opinion itself, put at its best. Society assumes a certain amount of moral knowledge in all its members, and it is right to do so. Society makes every one responsible for his morality up to a certain point, thus implying that it can be acquired and taught. And society itself teaches it in a variety of ways, but of course nature goes for a good deal. All,

[1] *Protag.* 320 C–328 D.

then, that the professed teacher can be expected to do is to teach a little better than the rest of the world.

But Plato expects more from him than this, and in the person of Socrates continues to examine him, not as to the fact of his teaching, but as to what it is that he teaches. If virtue can be taught, what is it? Protagoras had spoken of justice, temperance, piety, courage, wisdom, indiscriminately as virtue: are they five different names for one thing, or five different parts of the same thing? Suppose we say with Protagoras that they are parts, and heterogeneous parts, as the mouth, eyes, and nose are parts of the face; yet is it not hard to maintain that piety, for instance, has not something of the quality of justice? And how can wisdom and temperance be both opposites of foolishness, without being in some sense one? Or, once more, if temperance may be combined with injustice, will not this imply that injustice is something good?[1]

If it be still maintained that, however much the other virtues may have in common, courage at any rate is quite distinct (for we find men who are very unjust, licentious, irreligious, and unwise, who yet are very brave), we must ask, Can a man who is a fool be really brave? Is not confidence an element in all courage, and is it not just the addition of intelligence that makes confidence into something better than mere confidence, which may be the result of rage or madness? This, it may be said, only shows that wisdom makes confidence into courage, but not that wisdom makes courage what it is. We must then again ask, What is it which constitutes the excellence, the virtuousness, of courage? In

[1] *Protag.* 329 B–334 C. Then follows a long interlude (334 C–348 C), after which the question is taken up again where it had been left.

a word, what is the meaning of the distinction between good and evil in human life? Are they identical with pleasure and pain? If, with Protagoras, we decline to admit this, and equally decline to identify good with knowledge, how are we to conceive the relation between pleasure and knowledge? Is knowledge the strongest and ruling principle in man, so that, when we know what is good, it is impossible to do what is bad? Or is the common opinion true, that knowledge is the mere slave of pleasure and pain, passion and fear; so that we may know what is good, and yet do what is bad?[1]

Now, though Socrates and Protagoras may disagree with and despise common opinion, it is worth while to examine it. When then people say that a thing is bad but pleasant, or good but painful, what do they mean by bad and good? They do not mean that the thing is bad because it is pleasant, or good because it is painful, but that it is bad or good because, though pleasant or painful now, it deprives them of greater pleasure or pain in the future. Pleasure and pain, then, are the real objects of pursuit and avoidance, the things which people have in view when they call one thing good and another bad. But, if this is so, the common saying that we do what is bad, knowing it to be bad, under the influence of pleasure, is absurd; it is like saying, we do what is bad, knowing it to be so, under the influence of what is good; or again, we do what is less pleasant, knowing it to be so, under the influence of what is more pleasant. It may be said, indeed, that there is a great difference between pleasure or pain in the present and in the future; but it still remains that the difference is only one of pleasure or pain, for we have agreed that these are the only standard

[1] *Protag.* 349 A–352 D.

of comparison; it is a question of weighing one amount against the other. Now we know that the same objects appear larger or more numerous when seen near than when seen far off. Suppose then that human welfare had depended upon our choosing the larger magnitudes or numbers, and avoiding the smaller; in that case we should not have allowed ourselves to be governed by appearances, but by the sciences of measure and number. Similarly with pleasures and pains: human welfare lies in the right choice of them, and this can mean nothing but right measurement, and this means art and science. What the science is, is a further question; all that we now assert is that it is a science, and that it is the want of it, that is, ignorance, which produces the evil supposed to come from the victory of pleasure over knowledge. And from this it follows that it is not in human nature to do what is bad, that is, what is really less pleasant, knowingly or voluntarily; every one goes into evil through not knowing what is good [1].

Let us now return to our former subject, the relation of courage to the rest of virtue. Fear may be defined as expectation of evil, and danger as coming evil. The brave man, then, when he faces danger, does so because he knows that it is not really evil, but good, noble, pleasant; and the coward does not face it, because he does not know this. And again, when the brave man is afraid of a thing, he is so because he knows that it is really evil, while the fool and the madman are not afraid of it because they do not know this. Courage, therefore, so far from being compatible with the greatest ignorance, would seem to be a kind of knowledge,—knowledge of what is, and what is not, to be feared [2].

[1] *Protag.* 352 E–358 D. [2] *Ib.* 358 D–360 E.

Such is the conclusion of our argument; and, as Socrates remarks, it may well 'laugh at us.' For here is Socrates, who denied that virtue could be taught, now trying all he can to prove that it is knowledge; and, if knowledge cannot be taught, what can be? And here is Protagoras, who assumed that it was teachable, now anxious to show that it is anything rather than knowledge. One thing is plain to Socrates, that they must try to clear up this confusion, and enquire what virtue is before they ask whether it can be taught[1].

None of Plato's dialogues has more of the character of a philosophical drama than the *Protagoras*. This applies not only to the form and setting, but also in a great measure to the substance, of the work. The treatment of the main question is inlaid with more than the usual wealth of subordinate incident and illustration; and the centre of unity lies, not in any single moral problem or principle, but in the development of the far-reaching opposition between two modes of thought, between the spirits of speculative and popular philosophy, the critical and the professional, the uncompromising and the accommodating, the self-examining and the self-satisfied.

We are made to feel throughout the dialogue that the professor of social and political enlightenment has not reckoned with his subject. Much that he says is true, and its truth is not questioned by Socrates; but he has not thought out what is involved in the phrase 'to teach morality.' With all his contempt for popular opinion, and profession that he has something better to offer, he has really accepted the popular moral distinctions without enquiring into their meaning and justification. He

[1] *Protag.* 360 E–362 A.

sees that the various virtues must have something in common, but he cannot say what it is. He feels that all pleasant things are not good, but he has not asked himself why. He believes that knowledge is moral power, but he has not tried to explain the wide-spread belief in its impotence, or considered what sort of knowledge he is thinking of. Plato's criticism does more to clear the ground for advance than to make the advance itself. It shows that, if morality is to be put upon an enlightened basis, we must begin with an analysis of what morality really is, for as ordinarily practised and understood it is certainly not enlightened. It further suggests the direction that analysis must take, that, namely, of discovering the central and essential point from which the confused distinctions of the popular code can be explained, justified, or rejected. And, lastly, it indicates that this point will be found in a true conception or knowledge of man's real good or interest, by which the illusory appearances of feeling and emotion may be measured and reduced to their true proportions.

Meno. The *Protagoras*, starting with the assumption that morality can be taught, shows that neither its professed teachers nor society at large are in a position to teach it, and yet that it is in its very essence knowledge. The contribution of the *Meno* to the question of the nature of morality is in many respects the same as that of the *Protagoras*, but the conception of knowledge is made more definite by contrast, and the various aspects of the antagonism latent in the latter dialogue have assumed a more emphatic expression. On the one hand Anytus, the representative of the successful politicians and men of the world, gives utterance with unmitigated violence to the prejudice against the sophists which Protagoras

had thought to meet by out-spokenness[1]; and Socrates, though he suspects the quarter from which the prejudice comes, hardly conceals his sympathy with it[2]. On the other hand, the hostility felt by Anytus to the sophists is extended by him, though less openly, to Socrates himself[3], and we already see the beginning of that breach between philosophy and the world which Plato, when he wrote the *Gorgias*, felt to be impassable. The primary object of criticism in the *Protagoras* was the pretension of the professed teacher; only through him, and secondarily, was reference made to the actual morality of public life, which he undertook to instruct. But in the *Meno* the professed teachers are dismissed summarily, and the main interest centres in the great citizens and statesmen who are appealed to as the practical illustrations of virtue.

Meno is a young Thessalian nobleman, a disciple of Gorgias, with enough intellectual curiosity to make him raise questions, but with too little mind to appreciate their real difficulties and too little seriousness to face them. The question which he has asked Socrates concerns the acquisition of virtue; is it got by teaching, or by practice, or does it come by nature[4]? And, though, as Socrates is so fond of pointing out[5], it is impossible really to discuss the attributes of a thing until we know what the thing is, he yields to Meno's indolence so far as to put the question in this hypothetical form: What sort of thing must virtue be, supposing that it is got by teaching? It is clear that in that case it must be knowledge; for knowledge is the only thing that is

[1] *Meno*, 91 C–92 C. [2] *Ib.* 92 D, καὶ ἴσως τι λέγεις: cp. 96 A.
[3] *Ib.* 94 E–95 A, 99 E, 100 B. [4] *Ib.* 70 A.
[5] *Ib.* 71 B, 86 D–E, 100 B.

taught. Is it, then, knowledge? Virtue, we shall admit, is something good; is there, then, any good thing which is not embraced by knowledge? All good things are useful; and the utility of a thing depends on whether it is used rightly, and rightly means wisely. This is true of things of the body, such as health, strength, beauty, and wealth. And the same is the case with things of the soul; moral and intellectual gifts, if guided by intelligence, are useful; if not, they do harm. Such things, then, are in themselves neither good nor bad; they are made good or bad by the way in which they are used; the things of the body depend for their goodness on the soul, and the things of the soul upon wisdom. If then virtue is something good and useful, it must be, in whole or in part, wisdom. And from this it follows that it cannot come by nature: indeed, if it did, we should certainly have taken steps to find out the naturally good amongst us, and shut them up out of reach of corruption until they were of age to serve the state. It would seem, then, that virtue is got by teaching[1].

But here a difficulty presents itself. When we say that a thing is got by teaching, we imply that there are persons who teach and persons who learn it. Now Socrates, with all his efforts, has never yet been able to find any one who could teach virtue. Let us consult Anytus: he ought to be able to help us, for his father was both rich and wise, and gave him a good education; so at least the Athenians seem to think, for they elect him to the most important offices of state. Supposing then that we wanted to make Meno a shoemaker or a doctor or a flute-player, we should of course send him to the persons who professed to teach those crafts and

[1] *Meno*, 86 E–89 C.

were paid for so doing. Meno wants to learn the duties of a citizen, the best way of administering public and domestic affairs, of behaving to parents, of entertaining fellow-citizens and strangers; to whom is he to go to learn this virtue? The persons who profess to teach it, and are paid for doing so, are the sophists. But Anytus declares that the sophists are the ruin of all who go near them; and, though it is hard to understand, if this be so, how men like Protagoras should have made such fortunes, perhaps Anytus is right. But to whom then are we to go? 'Go to any Athenian gentleman,' says Anytus. And who, we ask, taught the Athenian gentlemen? 'The gentlemen before them. Surely there have been plenty of them.' Yes, there have been plenty, and there are still; but the question is this, Have these excellent men been able to impart their excellences to others? What are the facts about Themistocles, Aristides, Pericles, or Thucydides? Is it not notorious that, while they had their sons taught all sorts of accomplishments, such as riding, shooting, wrestling, playing, they never taught them their own virtues? And yet surely they would have done so, if they had been able. So much, in any case, is clear, that if the professed teachers of virtue are admitted to know nothing about it, while those who possess it cannot agree whether it can be taught or not, there cannot be said to be any teachers of it in the proper sense of the word, nor therefore any learners. Virtue, therefore, cannot be taught[1].

Are there, then, no good men? And, if there are, how do they become good? The truth is that we made an absurd mistake before. We said before that nothing is good without right guidance, and this is true. But we

[1] *Meno*, 89 C–96 C.

also said that right guidance implies knowledge, and this is not true; for in particular cases right opinion will serve as well as knowledge; a man whose opinion about a road is right is as good a guide as a man who knows the road. This is the case with our good statesmen; their virtue is that of opinion, not of knowledge. Is there, then, no difference between the two? Certainly; a difference in point of permanence. Right opinions are excellent things as long as they remain in the soul, but they soon run away unless they are made fast; and the way to make them fast is to see the reason of them: this converts them into knowledge. It is in this permanence that the superior value of knowledge lies; but, for this or that particular act, true opinion serves the purpose just as well [1].

Now neither knowledge nor right opinion comes by nature: goodness, therefore, is not natural. But neither does it come by teaching, for, as we have seen, there are no teachers of it. Yet we allow that it is something good and useful, and that the condition of goodness and usefulness is right guidance, and that the only right guides for man are knowledge and right opinion; and, as virtue is not taught, it cannot be knowledge; it remains, then, that it is right opinion. This is why our good statesmen are not able to make others like themselves; their goodness comes from opinion, not from knowledge. Their intelligence is thus on the same level with that of prophets and poets, who say many true and great things, but do not understand what they say. Their success is due to a sort of inspiration; as women and Lacedaemonians say of people whom they admire, they are 'divine' men. If we have been right in our reason-

[1] *Meno*, 96 D–98 C.

ing, then, the conclusion is this: virtue would seem to come neither by nature nor by teaching, but by the grace of heaven, and reason has nothing to do with it. Unless indeed there were found a statesman who could make others statesmen; the virtue of such a man would be to that of the rest of the world as the substance to a shadow[1].

The *Protagoras* had shown the want of depth and consistency in the moral theory of society and its professed instructors, and had indicated that the remedy was to be found in a knowledge which should give unity to the virtues and supply a standard of moral measurement. The knowledge similarly required in the *Meno* is conceived as a principle, not of measurement but of guidance, and it is further characterized by a formal contrast with opinion. The guiding or ruling function here assigned to reason connects closely with the idea (afterwards more fully developed by Plato) of an ultimate end, to which alone it 'profits' to attain, and the reference to which alone makes all means and instruments 'good.' The distinction between knowledge and opinion plays a vital part in Plato's general theory of knowledge. But what is of importance here to observe is Plato's growing feeling of the imperative necessity of principle or a reasoned morality in private, and still more in public, life. He has not yet reached the point of accusing the great statesmen of actual failure, as he does in the *Gorgias*. He admits their success, such as it is; but it is a success of guess-work, unable to give an account of itself, incommunicable to others, forming no permanent element in the intelligence of mankind. There is something 'divine' in it, just because it is unaccountable; but

[1] *Meno*, 98 C–100 A.

it would be better if a man could possess it instead of being possessed by it, and share it with humanity instead of letting it die with him.

The definition of goodness as knowledge, as examined in the *Protagoras* and the *Meno*, had the result of drawing attention to defects in existing moral theory and practice, which must be remedied if the definition is to answer to facts. The same definition in the *Laches* and the *Charmides* is made to lead to the conclusion that the knowledge in question must be further specified as to its nature and object if it is to hold as an account of goodness. Each of these dialogues deals, not with virtue, but with a particular virtue, courage in the one case, temperance in the other.

Laches. The point of departure in the *Laches* is a definition of courage almost identical with that arrived at in the *Protagoras*[1], as knowledge of what is to be feared, and what is not to be feared. This is interpreted to mean, not what is to be feared under certain special circumstances (in disease, for instance, or in agriculture, where the knowledge in question would be that of the doctor or the farmer), but what is to be feared or not to be feared altogether and as such; in fact, 'what it is better or not better for a man to experience.' This clearly makes courage a rare and difficult thing; it must be quite different from mere confidence, rashness, daring, and the like, and must be denied, not only to brutes, but to a great many human beings to whom it is usually ascribed[2]. But here a difficulty arises. Fear may be defined as expectation of coming evil. Now a man who has knowledge of coming evil must also have knowledge of

[1] See above, p. 256.

[2] *Laches*, 194 D–197 B.

evil present and past; in fact, of evil as such or 'under all circumstances'; for the time in which the object of knowledge exists makes no difference to knowledge; a thing once known is known whenever it may happen to occur. Courage, then, on this view would be co-extensive with all virtue, for what more can be wanting to a perfectly good man than that he should have knowledge of all good and evil? And yet it has been assumed from the first that courage is one among many parts of virtue[1].

Charmides.

The subject of the *Charmides* is 'temperance.' 'Temperance' is the accepted, and perhaps the least misleading, translation of σωφροσύνη, of which the primary meaning is sanity of mind. Perhaps 'sobriety,' though no longer much used, would be as good an equivalent as any. The central idea conveyed by the word seems to be that of the law-abiding spirit, whether the law be that of the state, of conscience, or of God. Self-control, modesty, humility, are all aspects of it; its opposites are licentiousness, insolence, pride, and, most comprehensively perhaps, the 'folly' of the English version of some books of the Old Testament.

In the *Charmides* temperance is defined by Critias as self-knowledge, which he explains to mean, not a specific knowledge with a specific object, but a knowledge of that which we or others know and do not know, a consciousness of knowledge and ignorance in general[2]. This definition, however, raises many questions. In the first place, in what sense is self-knowledge possible? Other mental operations, such as perception, desire, opinion, always relate to objects other than themselves, and we should expect the same to be true of knowledge.

[1] *Laches*, 198 A–199 E. [2] *Charmides*, 165 C–167 A.

In any case we must allow that knowledge implies a relation, and it is a difficult and unsolved question whether a relative thing can be self-related[1]. But secondly, admitting the possibility of such a thing as self-knowledge, in the sense in which Critias understands it, it would not involve knowledge of that which we know and that which we do not know; it would only mean knowledge of the fact, not of the matter, of knowledge. The knowledge of the matter is always a particular knowledge with a particular object; the doctor and the musician owe *what* they know to their respective sciences; all that the virtue of self-knowledge would add to this would be the consciousness *that* they know it. Such a consciousness could not prevent us from attempting things which we did not understand, or enable us to prevent others from doing the same. Its value seems to be reduced to that of giving us a better idea of what knowledge in general means, and this may make it easier for us to acquire a new branch of knowledge, and to criticize other people's pretensions to a knowledge which we already possess; that is all[2]. And again, even supposing the existence of a knowledge of knowledge and ignorance in the wider sense, and that our lives were regulated by it, what would be the result? Certainly we should never try to do anything which we did not know how to do; charlatanry would disappear; we should never be taken in by an incompetent doctor or pilot or general; our clothes and furniture would all be made by honest workmen. But would the human race fare better and be happier? It may be true that to live according to knowledge is to live well, but we must ask, according to what know-

[1] *Charmides*, 167 B–169 B. [2] *Ib.* 169 D–172 C.

ledge? Clearly the knowledge of all the trades, arts, and even all the events, in the world would not make us happy; the only knowledge that can do this is that which tells us whether all the other kinds of knowledge are for our real interest or not; in a word, the knowledge of good and evil. So that temperance, if it be self-knowledge in the sense in which we have understood it, would seem to be but an unprofitable thing after all[1].

Thus both the *Laches* and the *Charmides* result in a dilemma, a dilemma which suggests that, if morality is to be a matter of knowledge, it can only be knowledge of the true end of life, of human good and evil. The former dialogue shows that a particular virtue, if fully understood, leads to its identification with such a knowledge; the latter shows that another particular virtue is only of any real value in human life if it be so identified. The argument of the *Charmides* reminds us of one somewhat similar, though conducted in a lighter vein and with a less explicit result, in the first book of the *Republic*[2]. Justice having been there defined as the power or art of rendering to every one his due, it is shown by a gradual process of elimination that, in that case, it will serve no purpose, because the perception when a particular thing is due under particular circumstances will always be found to belong to some particular branch of knowledge; so that all dues could apparently be rendered equally well without the help of justice. The link which is left out in the *Republic* is supplied in the *Charmides*[3], when it is said that, though the various arts and sciences can go on performing their

[1] *Charmides*, 172 C–175 D. [2] *Rep.* 1, 331 C–334 B.
[3] *Charmides*, 174 C.

several functions without the knowledge of good and evil, it depends upon this latter knowledge whether they perform them well and in the real interest of mankind.

Euthydemus.

A result which partially combines those of the *Charmides* and the *Meno* is arrived at by a different method from that of either in the *Euthydemus*. This dialogue is, like the *Protagoras*, primarily concerned with education, but more from its intellectual than its moral and political side. In the *Protagoras* we are asked, How are our young men to get right principles of conduct? in the *Euthydemus*, How are their minds to be turned to true culture? The former dialogue, starting with the sporadic ideas of popular morality, ends by pointing to their unification in some form of knowledge; the latter, beginning with the commendation of knowledge in general, concludes with the dilemma that knowledge is useless without a conception of the moral end of man. As regards tone and form, the *Euthydemus* might be described as the satirical farce which accompanies the stately drama of the *Protagoras*. In the latter the weak points in the popular teacher are unmistakably though delicately touched, but the balance between philosopher and sophist is evenly held, and we leave them with the feeling that they may both be fellow-workers in the cause of truth. In the former, the mercenary filibusters of culture are gibbeted with a satire which never relents, and the wretched rags of a philosophy which has sunk into verbal sword-play are set side by side in unrelieved contrast with the pure outlines of the science of human welfare. It is only a part of the dialogue which directly bears upon the question before us; the rest of it is occupied with the humorous exposure of a number of logical

sophisms; but as the latter part is inseparably connected with the former, and its motive is to bring out in strong relief the bearing of knowledge and philosophy upon life, rather than to illustrate particular fallacies of reasoning, it seems well not to attempt to separate the two.

The brother sophists, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, are described by Socrates as two veritable pancratiasts; they teach and practise the art of fighting in all its branches—with arms, with rhetoric, and with logic; this last and greatest accomplishment they have only learnt within the last year or two. They undertake to turn out a 'good man' better and quicker than anybody else in Greece, and it is a matter of perfect indifference to them whether or no the pupil believes in the possibility of 'teaching' goodness. Socrates had introduced to them the boy Cleinias, whose education is a matter of concern to all his friends, and requested them to awaken his interest in knowledge and virtue[1]. The brothers set to work at once. First Euthydemus asked Cleinias a question, and proved to him that his answer was wrong; and then Dionysodorus 'took the ball from his brother,' and proved that the answer was right. The way in which they did it was by using the same word in a double sense, of which Cleinias was not aware. They had tripped up the poor boy twice in this way, and were going to give him a third fall, when Socrates came to the rescue[2]. He explained the trick to Cleinias, and assured him that these logical antics were only the preliminary play of the brothers; the real mysteries of their wisdom were yet to come. Philosophy must, indeed, begin with the right understanding of the use of words, but it is not philosophy to go about pulling

[1] *Euth.* 271 A–275 B. [2] *Ib.* 275 C–277 C.

people's chairs from under them and laughing at them as they lie on their backs. So he would ask the brothers now to begin their work in earnest, and, to show the sort of way in which he wished them to set about it, he would himself (if they would promise not to laugh) extemporize a conversation with Cleinias[1].

Having shown, in the same way and by the same illustrations as in the *Meno*, that the so-called good things of life, in possession of which welfare is agreed to consist, are only good so far as they are well, i. e. wisely, used, and that wisdom is therefore the one really good and desirable thing in the world[2], Socrates, with an apology for his amateur attempt at philosophy, begged the brothers to go on, and to show Cleinias what particular sort of wisdom it is which will make a man happy and good. Dionysodorus, accordingly, having first ascertained that Cleinias' friends were in earnest in wishing him to become wise, proved to them that they were wishing his annihilation, for they wished him to cease being what he was. Cleinias' friend Ctesippus was naturally angry at this imputation, and said Dionysodorus lied, and contradicted him. But Dionysodorus demonstrated to him that lying and contradiction are impossible; the former, because it is impossible to say the thing that is not; the latter, because, if two persons speak about the same thing, either they say it, and then they agree, or they do not say it, and then they cannot disagree, or one says it and the other does not, and then their words have no relation to each other at all[3].

Socrates, who recognized an old friend in this argument, pointed out that it not only upsets all other

[1] *Euth.* 277 D–278 E. [2] *Ib.* 278 E–282 D.
[3] *Ib.* 282 D–286 B.

arguments, but itself too. If false speech and false thought and error are all impossible, it is impossible to teach anything and impossible to refute anything, and the professions of the brothers come to nothing. He however was persuaded that they were still playing with their audience, and, like Proteus, concealing their real shapes. The only thing was to hold tight to them until they revealed what they really meant. Meantime he would again give them a sample of what he would wish their revelation to be[1]. We got so far before as to admit the necessity of knowledge to happiness. What knowledge is it to be? It would be no good, for example, to know where to find and how to make gold, or even to know how to make ourselves immortal, unless we also knew how to use gold and immortality. What, then, is the knowledge that both makes and uses? Is it rhetoric? No; for, admirable as our rhetoricians are, they often cannot deliver the speeches which they compose. Indeed their art is a somewhat inferior branch of the charmer's art; the charmer charms vipers and spiders and scorpions, and the rhetorician charms courts of law and popular assemblies and mobs. Is it generalship? No; for the general, like others of the hunter class, does not deal with his conquests himself, but hands them over to the statesman, just as the fisherman hands over his fish to the cook, and the mathematician his discoveries to the dialectician. Perhaps statesmanship or kingship is the art for which we are looking. It is this which sits at the helm of the state, and all the other arts hand over their products to it to be utilized. But then the question arises, What is the good which this sovereign art itself produces? It produces, we may

[1] *Euth.* 286 B–288 D.

say, wealth, peace, freedom; but we agreed before that such things are not good in themselves apart from wisdom. If then the sovereign art is to do any real good, it must make men wise. But wise in what? Wise, we are compelled to say, in making others wise. And then the same question recurs again, and we are brought round once more to the point with which we started, What is the knowledge which will make men happy?[1]

In this sea of difficulty Socrates called upon the Dioscuri to come to the rescue. Euthydemus heard the prayer and came. He offered either to teach Socrates the knowledge for which he was looking, or to prove to him that he had already got it. Socrates chose the latter, and the proof was as follows. 'You know something: therefore you know: therefore you know everything; for, if there were anything that you did not know, you would not know.' Socrates humbly asked the brothers whether they too knew everything, and they said that they did. 'What! Everything?' asked Ctesippus. 'Yes,' they said, 'everything.' The harder they were pressed, and the more outrageous the questions, the more daringly they answered, like wild boars at bay, and when they could not find answers they retorted with questions of their own. By insisting on having unqualified answers to qualified questions, they proved the most miraculous things; that, for instance, as once a father is always a father, everybody's father is everybody else's father; that, as gold is good and you cannot have too much of a good thing, perfect happiness would be to have gold in your stomach, your brain, and your eyes; and that, as the presence of beauty makes things beautiful, the presence of Dionysodorus makes

[1] *Euth.* 288 D–292 E.

Socrates into Dionysodorus. The climax was reached when Ctesippus, who was getting more and more excited in the game, exclaimed at one of their proofs, 'Bravo! Hercules! That *is* a beauty!' When Dionysodorus asked whether bravo was Hercules, or Hercules bravo, it was too much, and Ctesippus acknowledged that the brothers were invincible. A storm of applause followed from the audience, and the very pillars of the building shook with delight[1].

Before parting, Socrates said a few complimentary words to the brothers. He envied them, he said, the genius which could make such an acquisition in so short a time. Three points in it particularly excited his admiration. One was the magnificent disregard which they showed for the opinion of every one except the few who were like themselves; setting these aside, the rest of the world would be more ashamed of victory than of defeat with such weapons. Then again he was charmed with the thoroughly liberal spirit of their method; when they had proved that black was white, and sewed up everybody's mouth, they were kind enough to do the same for themselves, so that nobody could complain. But the greatest proof of the scientific character of their discovery was the rapidity with which it could be learnt, as Ctesippus had shown. This was a great advantage to them as teachers, but on the other hand it should make them careful how they displayed their knowledge, or they might lose the monopoly. 'Water,' as Pindar says, 'is the best thing in the world'; but it is very cheap[2].

Socrates told the story to his old friend Crito, who had already heard an account of the meeting, and who

[1] *Euth.* 293 A–303 B.

[2] *Ib.* 303 B–304 B.

wondered that Socrates was not ashamed to take part in such an exhibition. No doubt education is the one thing needful, but, if these are the professors of it and this is 'philosophy,' how can we urge our sons to apply themselves to it? Socrates would say to Crito: 'Do not throw over philosophy because many or most of those who pursue it are good for nothing; this is the case with many walks of life. The only way is, not to think about the persons, but to examine the thing itself: if it is bad, have nothing to do with it; if it is what I believe it to be, follow it and practise it, yourself and your children.'[1]

The conception of the knowledge necessary to human welfare in the *Euthydemus* resembles that of the *Meno* in the using and guiding function which it implies; and the attempt to identify it with the science of kingship or statesmanship anticipates the leading idea of the *Republic*. On the other hand the difficulty of assigning a precise product to this knowledge recalls the final dilemma of the *Charmides*. There it is asked, What would the fullest consciousness of the nature and limits of all knowledge profit us, unless it involved the consciousness of 'the good' of knowledge? Here it is asked, What would a science to which all other sciences were subordinate profit us, unless it added to them the knowledge how to use them?

We have thus far been dealing with dialogues, the subjects of which are formulated in the question, What is goodness, and how is it got? The investigation of the question has led to two principal results. It has shown, firstly, that the meaning or essence of a moral principle

[1] *Euth.* 304 B–307 C.

is not realized or known so long as it is confused, either with the various extraneous elements with which it is combined in experience, or with the accidental circumstances in which it is manifested or to which it gives rise: it must be understood as what it is and nothing else, if it is to be really understood. Secondly, it has shown that the conception of goodness as knowledge, that is, as *rational* insight and conviction, while it is one to which we are led by converging lines of thought, points beyond itself to the further conception of an ultimate good, which is the one thing worth living for; a conception which would supply a standard of measurement for pleasure and pain, would give unity to the diversity of moral qualities and a principle to moral practice, and would assign to the sciences and arts their several places in the economy of human life.

We have now to pass to dialogues in which this further conception is itself the central object of enquiry. 'What we really want to know,' says Socrates in the *Gorgias*[1], 'is, who is happy and who is not,' or, 'what sort of men we ought to be and how we ought to live.' 'What we want to find,' we are told in the *Philebus*[2], 'is a condition of soul which can make the life of all mankind happy,' or 'what is the best thing that a man can possess.' And, in the *Republic*, the first formulation of the question, 'What is justice?' is soon exchanged for the second, 'How is a man to live his life so as to live it most profitably[3]?' Besides this similarity in the questions which these dialogues propound, they also resemble one another in developing their answers

[1] *Gorg.* 472 C and 500 B–C; cp. *ib.* 487 E, 492 D.
[2] *Phil.* 11 D and 19 C.
[3] *Rep.* i. 344 E.

polemically, though the objects of the polemic, and the method and tone in which it is conducted, differ widely. In the *Gorgias* the antithesis is between the claims of power and pleasure, on the one side, and those of truth and goodness on the other, to be the true end of life; and the method employed is to show that the consistent denial of all moral distinctions makes any such end inconceivable. In the *Philebus* the rival claims are those of pleasure and reason to be respectively the whole or chief constituents of human well-being, and a metaphysical and psychological analysis leads to the conclusion that feeling as such is the mere negation of what is real, and only gets substance and meaning through the formative energy of mind. The *Republic*, starting from the opposition between the worth of morality as an inward principle and its external results or concomitants, shows that virtue, so far from being another name for material advantages, is the very principle of the soul's life and health; that the right external organization of society is the expression of that life and health; and that such organization is only possible so far as society is ruled by knowledge of the laws of the world and of man's position in it. Indications of this idea, by which human life is brought into connexion with a universal order, are found in the *Gorgias* and still more in the *Philebus*; it receives a further development in the *Phaedo*, where the good is identified with the sustaining cause of nature, and again in the *Timaeus*, where it is personified in the creative God.

Gorgias. We come now to the several dialogues in detail. The *Gorgias* opens with the question, What is rhetoric? and closes with a picture of the last judgment. What is the order of ideas which connects points apparently so

remote? Plato has made rhetoric the special subject of two dialogues, the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*; in the latter he treats it from its literary and logical, in the former from its ethical and political, side. In the former dialogue it is brought before us as the typical instrument of human power, the art of swaying men and so doing what we please. On this ground it is maintained by the rhetorician to be the greatest of all arts. Thus the issue is raised, Is the mere power to satisfy desire, and the mere pleasure accompanying such satisfaction, the greatest good? Socrates denies it, and denies it on the ground that neither power in itself nor pleasure in itself constitutes a good or end at all, and that we only make them such by introducing into them a quite different principle, which is already the germ of morality; in other words, that a consistently non-moral theory of life is logically self-destructive. We here come upon the most fundamental and characteristic idea in Plato's philosophy of life, and the one also which, to the modern mind, it is most difficult to seize, the idea which may be most shortly expressed by saying that the moral is the rational. The constant appeal to the arts and sciences which we are struck with in the *Gorgias* and other ethical dialogues is not merely illustrative; it expresses Plato's conviction that all life exhibits reason, and that morality is simply the recognition of this reason in a particular sphere. It is the more important to insist upon this feature in the *Gorgias*, because of all Plato's dialogues it is that in which he most combines the tone of the prophet and the preacher with that of the philosopher. Nowhere else are we so vividly reminded of the Biblical antithesis between sin and righteousness, the flesh and the spirit; nowhere else does the 'love of

wisdom' seem to come so near to the 'love of God.' Yet nowhere else is Plato more himself. The opposition of his enemy is not drowned in denunciatory thunders, or absorbed in a personal assurance of salvation; the concentrated eloquence and relentless logic with which he upholds the cause of right and truth are met by the champion of pleasure and power with language as forcible and conviction as unbending; and under their expressions of irony or contempt there are not wanting gleams of mutual admiration and pity. And while the philosopher defiantly proclaims his isolation from the world, while he refuses to count heads or to admit witnesses, and relies only upon consistency with himself and the evidence of his own soul, it is still the unquenchable desire for the good of men which sustains him; the same Socrates who will not allow that any Athenian politician has realized his own ideal is proud to claim for himself the almost solitary glory of truly serving the state.

The problem of the *Gorgias* is developed in three stages, in which the antithesis, implicit from the first, becomes gradually more explicit, and the rival solutions more radical. Gorgias, the famous master of rhetoric, with whom in the first part of the dialogue Socrates is confronted, is represented as a man of honesty and principle, but quite unaware of the inconsistency which is latent in the theory of his art. He is treated by Socrates with elaborate but unyielding courtesy, and retires from his untenable position to make room for Polus[1], the wild 'colt' of his school, who prances into the field to the defence of his master. Polus sees that the inconsistency proved against Gorgias arose from his making a certain

[1] Πῶλος (Polus) is the Greek for 'colt.'

concession to public opinion, and boldly proclaims his own emancipation from moral prejudices; but, as he still retains the feeling that there is something 'disgraceful' in doing injustice, he is gradually reduced to a dilemma from which the only escape is by denying any but a 'conventional' validity to all moral distinctions, and asserting as the 'law of nature' the right of every one to do what he pleases as far as he has the power. This final step is taken by Callicles, the brilliant and cultivated politician and man of the world, who sticks at nothing, believes in nothing, and fears nothing. The tone of Socrates, who has managed the sprawling impetuosity of Polus with high-handed but playful contempt, changes, as the struggle deepens in the third part, into that of set resolve and incisive earnestness, as of a man certain of death but certain also of victory.

The argument opens as follows. Gorgias, the great rhetorician, asked by Socrates what is the nature of his art, defines it as the art of producing persuasion by the use of words, asserting at the same time that it confers upon its possessor the greatest of goods, freedom for himself and power over others. When further asked to distinguish it from arts like arithmetic, which also produce persuasion, he explains that the subject-matter of rhetorical persuasion is justice and injustice, and its sphere the courts of law and other large assemblies, while the conviction which it produces is not that of knowledge (which is necessarily true), but that of belief (which may or may not be true): in fact, rhetoric only 'persuades,' it does not also 'teach.'—It would appear, then, to Socrates that when the popular assembly has to be advised upon any technical matter, such as health, ship-building, war, the persons to advise will be those who have the technical

knowledge in question, not the rhetorician.—But Gorgias points out that it was Themistocles and Pericles, not the architects, by whose advice the ports and walls of Athens were built; that it is the orators who carry the elections of generals; that he himself has often induced a patient to submit to treatment when the doctors had failed; in fact, that there is no subject on which a good rhetorician could not carry a mass of people with him against a man of technical knowledge; so that the rhetorical faculty may be said to have all other faculties under its single control. On the other hand, though it is so powerful, this is no reason why the rhetorician should depreciate the men of technical knowledge, or why the public should hate or banish the teachers of rhetoric. The power may be unjustly used, of course, like the power of boxing; but this is not the fault of the power itself, or of those who impart it.—It seems to Socrates that there is an inconsistency in this position. Gorgias undertakes to make a man a good rhetorician, that is, to enable a man who has no technical knowledge of a subject to speak to a crowd, that is, to persons who also have no technical knowledge, more persuasively than a man who knows the subject. The speaker, then, may be ignorant of what he is speaking about, but he must be able to produce the appearance to other ignorant people of knowing more than those who know. Now what Socrates wishes to be told is, whether the relation of rhetoric to moral matters is the same as to technical matters; whether it is enough for the good speaker to appear to ignorant people to know about justice and injustice, or whether he must have really learnt them before he can be a good speaker.—Gorgias thinks that he must have really learnt them.—But this implies that

the good speaker must be a just man; for a man who has learnt justice is just, as a man who has learnt music is a musician. And yet Gorgias spoke before of a possible unjust use of rhetoric[1].

The position of Gorgias is that of an honourable but unphilosophical man, who regards his art as an instrument or faculty, but has an instinctive feeling that its possession ought to go along with its right use. What Socrates does is to press into relief the two inconsistent ideas which coexist comfortably in his mind. If rhetoric is a mere faculty which admits of being used well or ill, then the teacher of it must not assume an operative knowledge of moral principles as part of his stock-in-trade. He must consent to divorce his art from morality, and regard it as the method of making anything look plausible. This is just what a great master of the art recoils from. He knows that his power is most conspicuously exercised in connexion with questions of right and wrong, not with technical questions; he knows that he can dispense to a great extent with technical knowledge, and yet be successful; and he shrinks from admitting that his hold upon morality may be as superficial as his hold upon medicine or navigation. Thus, while he professes to regard the power which his art confers as in itself the greatest of goods, he silently imports into his conception of mere power an additional element of moral principle, and saves his conscience at the expense of his consistency.

Polus sees this clearly, and attributes it to a concession to custom. Everybody, he explains, would of course *say* that a rhetorician must have learnt justice, but it is mere philistinism to base arguments upon such admissions.

[1] *Gorgias*, 449 C–461 A.

And now he would like to know what sort of art Socrates himself considers rhetoric to be. Socrates replies that he does not consider it an 'art' at all. Rhetoric, as he understands it, is an 'empirical,' not a 'technical' accomplishment: it requires 'a good eye, and courage, and natural ability in dealing with men,' but it cannot give an account of its processes or assign their causes, and therefore is not an art, for no 'unaccountable' thing deserves the name of art. The object of this empirical accomplishment is to produce pleasure; in other words, to flatter. If we start with the distinction between soul and body, we may divide flattery into four parts, as follows. The body and the soul may be in a really good, or in an apparently good, condition, and there are certain arts which cultivate the real good of each; those which cultivate that of the soul are the legislative and judicial arts (two branches of the political art), and those which cultivate that of the body are gymnastic and medicine. Answering to these four genuine arts there are four counterfeits, which do not know but guess, and which aim, not at the good, but at the pleasure, of their subjects. The counterfeit of medicine is the art of confectionery, that of gymnastic the tiring art[1], that of the legislative art is sophistic, and that of the judicial art rhetoric; and, as the judicial and legislative arts have much in common from their common subject-matter, so rhetoric and sophistic get mixed up with one another and are often very hard to distinguish. Each of these species of flattery professes to know what is best for its subject, but really aims at nothing but what happens to be pleasantest at

[1] Κομμωτική is the whole art of 'getting oneself up': the art of 'encasing oneself in a spurious beauty by shaping and colouring and smoothing and dressing.'—*Gorg.* 465 B.

the moment. Rhetoric, then, does for the soul what confectionery does for the body[1].

Polus is surprised that Socrates should think so little of rhetoric; surely the rhetoricians have great power in the state; 'do they not put to death whom they wish, and plunder and banish just as they fancy, like tyrants?' But Socrates distinguishes: it is one thing to do 'what one wishes,' another to do 'what one fancies[2]'; the tyrant and the rhetorician do the second, but not the first. For let us consider. When we do a thing, which is in itself neither good nor bad, for the sake of something good, it is the latter thing, not the former, that we really wish. Now the tyrant or the rhetorician in question kills or plunders or banishes for the sake of something good, that is, because he thinks it is better for him. But suppose that it happens not to be better for him; then he may be said to do what he fancies, but he cannot be said to do what he wishes. If, then, 'having great power' means something good, the fact that the rhetorician can kill, plunder, and banish whom he fancies does not imply that he has great power, or that he does what he wishes[3].

Nay, further, Socrates is ready to prove that, except under certain conditions, both he and Polus would decline such a power as the rhetorician possesses. Polus would decline it, for instance, unless he could exercise it with impunity; Socrates, unless he could exercise it justly. Both, therefore, mean by 'having great power,' not the mere power to do certain things, but the power to do them in a way which is good for themselves; otherwise we should

[1] *Gorgias*, 461 B–466 A.

[2] Ποιεῖν ἃ βούλονται, ποιεῖν ἃ δοκεῖ αὐτοῖς. *Ib.* 466 E.

[3] *Ib.* 466 A–468 E.

all think power, not a great and good, but a little and bad, thing to have. The only question is, *When* are things good for us, *when* bad? Socrates maintains they are good when done justly, bad when done unjustly.—Polus thinks that any child could confute Socrates. Look at Archelaus, the new ruler of Macedonia; he cut the throats of his uncle and cousin, drowned his brother, and usurped the throne. Is he the most miserable man in Macedonia? Who would not like to be Archelaus?—This is not what Socrates understands by being confuted. It is the way of the rhetoricians in the law-courts: they produce a number of distinguished men to witness to the truth of what they say, and, if their opponent produces few or none, they think their case is proved. No doubt Polus could find plenty of witnesses among the great men of Athens; but no amount of false evidence will 'drive a man out of the reality and the truth.' One witness, and one only, Socrates engages to have on his side before he has done, and that is Polus himself; and he cares to have no more.

What, then, are the points at issue between them? They involve no less a question than that of the nature of human happiness. Polus maintains that it is possible for an unjust man to be happy, Socrates maintains that it is impossible. Polus holds that an unjust man is happy if he goes unpunished; Socrates holds that he is miserable in any case, but less miserable if he is punished, more miserable if he is unpunished. Polus would like to know, then, whether an unjust aspirant to tyranny is happier if he is caught, racked, mutilated, blinded, crucified, or impaled, than if he succeeds and has a glorious reign. Ask any of the audience. To Socrates this seems mere 'bogey' talk; and, as to putting it to

the vote of the audience, he does not know enough of politics to do that; there is only one person whose vote he knows how to ask for, and that is the person with whom he is arguing[1].

Let us take, then, the first question first. While maintaining that to suffer injustice is more 'evil' than to do it, Polus admits that to do injustice is the more 'ugly': he distinguishes between 'evil' and 'ugly,' 'good' and 'beautiful.' He further admits that things are beautiful in virtue either of some use which they serve, or of some pleasure which they give, or of both. The beautiful, then, is definable as either the good or the pleasant, or both; the ugly is either the evil or the painful, or both; and this applies equally to such things as the human form and works of art, and to such things as laws and institutions. If then to do injustice is more ugly than to suffer it, it must exceed the latter either in pain or in evil, or in both; clearly it does not exceed it in pain, and therefore not in both; it must therefore exceed it in evil, and be worse. And, as no one can prefer the worse to the better, no one can prefer doing injustice to suffering it[2].

And now for the second point at issue. Which is the greater evil, to do injustice and be justly punished for it, or to do it with impunity? Punishment implies an agent and a patient, and wherever this relation exists we find that, in whatever way the agent acts, in that way the patient is acted upon. If, then, punishment be justly inflicted, the recipient receives what is just; and what is just is allowed by Polus to be also beautiful; the person who is justly punished, then, must receive benefit from the punishment (for he clearly does not receive pleasure,

[1] *Gorgias*, 468 E–474 A. [2] *Ib.* 474 B–475 E.

and we agreed that the beautiful might be defined as either the beneficial or the pleasant). The particular benefit which he receives is riddance of evil in his soul, that is, vice, which of all kinds of evil Polus admits to be the ugliest, and therefore the worst (for it is clearly not the most painful). Justice then does for the soul what medicine does for the body, and economy for wealth; and, as the ugliness of vice is greater than that of disease or poverty, so the beauty of justice is greater than that of medicine or economy. The happiest man, then, is he who has no evil in his soul; the next happiest he who gets rid of it, that is, who is justly punished; and those who fly from the pain of justice are like children who are afraid of the doctor. The most miserable of all are those who do injustice and are not punished, and the second in misery are those who do injustice under any circumstances and with whatever result. What, then, can be the use of rhetoric? None at all for defending ourselves or our friends when we have done wrong; it might possibly be of some use in bringing ourselves to justice; on the other hand, if we wished to do anybody all the harm in our power, we might use rhetoric to save him from a punishment which he deserved [1].

In this second part of the dialogue the real nature of the argument begins to emerge. Gorgias had admitted, firstly, that rhetoric did not imply knowledge, though he inconsistently maintained that it did imply moral knowledge; and, secondly, he had claimed for it the production of the greatest good, freedom and power, though he assumed that the power might be wrongly, and ought to be rightly, used. Polus holds that the admission of a moral principle by Gorgias was a mere

[1] *Gorgias*, 476 A–481 B.

concession; that the power which rhetoric confers is simply the power to do what one likes, right or wrong; and that this is the true object of human desire. Socrates correspondingly denies that rhetoric, so understood, is an art at all; that the power so conferred is what men mean by power; and that it is a real object of desire. Thus the abandonment of moral principle is treated by Plato as the abandonment of all principle; life becomes irrational in proportion as it becomes immoral. 'The good,' wherever it is found, means principle; it is that which gives aim, order, coherence. Pleasure is opposed to it just because it has no principle, but is the chance feeling of the moment. In the highest things and in the lowest there is a right and a wrong; the right always means that the thing in question is recognized to have a reason, the wrong that it is recognized to have none. The test, alike of the truth and the goodness of a principle, is, how much it will explain, how far it radiates, what amount of diverse elements it correlates. The confectioner's art as compared with that of the doctor is 'empirical,' because it has no object but to please the palate, and the mere pleasure of the palate compared with the health of the whole body carries us very little way in the economy of physical life. So far as it does carry us, it will be found to be not pleasure as such, but some particular kinds of pleasure, which give the principle on which the confectioner works; and what these particular kinds are will be determined by something else than pleasure, which something will be the real ground of the principle.

The same point is illustrated by the distinction which Plato here draws between 'doing what we wish' and 'doing what we fancy.' Just as it is not any mere

pleasure of any mere moment which is the real object of desire, so it is not the power to do whatever seems good at any moment which we really mean when we think of power as a thing worth having. We unconsciously import into it some condition, and make it the power to do something *with a certain motive*; not the fancy of the moment because it is the fancy of the moment, but the fancy of the moment because it is felt to be good for us, is the real substance of our wish. And, as soon as we have said this, we have put ourselves upon something like a principle, something which can be tested, compared, argued upon, an element in an order of things from which we cannot escape, and to which we may refuse to conform, but only at the cost of bringing discord into our lives. Some such principle is still recognized by Polus, though he professes to make no concessions to what he regards as moral prejudices. He still has a feeling that, though to do wrong is not 'worse' than to suffer it, it is yet somehow or other more foul, more disgraceful, more 'ugly.' The last term and its opposite 'beautiful' are the most literal equivalents for the untranslatable Greek words, *αἰσχρόν* and *καλόν*. The analysis of beauty into utility and pleasure, goodness and charm, and the indiscriminate application of it to natural, artistic, and ethical objects, will be better considered in another place. The important point here is the effect assigned to the vague feeling of disapprobation which Polus still retains for wrong-doing. That effect is to give another blow to the claim of pleasure to be the principle of goodness. It draws attention to the fact that, as long as any sort of distinction is felt between right and wrong, the feeling of the distinction cannot be resolved into one of mere pleasure or pain, for there is no necessary pain in

doing wrong; any sense of its undesirableness which we may have must be a sense that it is in some way worse for us, and this again commits us to the conception of a life determined by some end, a life of which the ultimate postulate is that it must be reasonable.

We have already partially anticipated the development of the third and last section of the dialogue. Callicles begins by asking whether Socrates is really in earnest; for, if what he has been saying is true, the whole of life is turned upside down, and we are all doing the very opposite of what we ought to do. Socrates can explain to Callicles how it is that he says these strange things. He is in love with philosophy, as Callicles is in love with the Athenian populace; and lovers tend to say the same as their beloved. When Callicles speaks in the popular assembly, Socrates observes that, if the people disagree with him, he has to come round to what they wish. And so it is with Socrates; it is philosophy, his beloved, who is always saying these things to him, and always the same things; and, if Callicles does not like them, he must stop the mouth of philosophy, and prove that what she says is false. If he cannot do that, his whole life will be a discord; and that is the worst of all discords; for it is better to have your lyre or your chorus out of tune than to be out of tune with your own self[1].

What Socrates says seems to Callicles nothing but vulgar rant. The reason why he was able to silence Gorgias and Polus was only that they were ashamed to say what they thought. First, Gorgias admitted that he should teach his pupils morality if they had not learnt it when they came to him; and then Polus admitted that to do wrong was more ugly than to suffer it; and so

[1] *Gorgias*, 481 B–482 C.

they were both made to contradict themselves. But these are mere vulgar commonplaces to which Socrates appealed, based upon law, not upon nature, which is generally the opposite of law. Socrates took advantage of their hesitating to violate certain conventional ideas, and then silently substituted the natural for the conventional meaning of the ideas. Thus when Polus admitted that it was more foul or base to do than to suffer injustice, meaning 'conventionally more base,' Socrates pressed the admission in the sense of 'naturally more base'; whereas 'naturally' it is baser to suffer injustice, and no one but a helpless slave would endure it. The truth is that the laws are made by the weaker majority of mankind, who, in order to protect themselves and to frighten the stronger, proclaim that it is unjust and disgraceful for one man to have more than another. But what nature herself declares to be just is that the better should have more than the worse, the stronger than the weaker; this is 'the real law of nature,' and it comes out clearly enough in the doings both of men and the other animals. The law which we make, indeed, and with which we confine our noblest youth, like lions, in a charmed slavery, says that justice means equality; but, when a man is born great enough, he breaks the spell and tramples on all our parchment laws, and stands up our master instead of our slave, and the justice of nature shines out in its strength. This is what Pindar meant when he sang of 'Law, the universal king.' And this is what Socrates would see to be the truth, if he would leave philosophy and take to higher things. Philosophy is all very well up to a certain point. As a part of the education of the young it is a graceful accomplishment, and no gentleman can dispense with it. But if pursued

into later life it is the ruin of a man, even though he have great natural gifts; it makes him ignorant of the laws of his country, of the language of public life and society, of the pleasures and desires of the world, and of human nature in general; and, when he has to do anything practical, he is ridiculous, as ridiculous as politicians probably are when they try to talk philosophy. The right way is to have some of both: philosophy when one is a boy, real life when one is grown up. A grown man who goes on with philosophy is as contemptible as one who goes on lisping like a child, and he deserves to be beaten. He will never be able to show his face in public, in 'the arena of fame' as the poet calls it, but will pass his life in a corner whispering his wisdom to three or four schoolboys. Callicles has a regard for Socrates, and would put it to him, as a friend, whether so noble a soul ought to show itself in so childish a figure; whether it is not disgraceful that he and others who go deep into philosophy should be, as they are, at the mercy of any scoundrel who might choose to bring them before a court of justice; whether there can be much wisdom in an art which so incapacitates its most gifted devotees from protecting themselves or others that a man may slap them in the face with impunity. Surely it would be better to give up this ingenious nonsense, and take to the culture of life and action [1].

Socrates congratulates himself on having found in Callicles a real 'touchstone' by which to test his theory. Callicles has all the three requisites, wisdom, frankness, and goodwill. If he can be got to agree with Socrates, it will not be from deficiency in ability; it certainly will not be from excess of modesty; nor will it be with the

[1] *Gorgias*, 482 C–486 D.

intention of deceiving. If the theory will stand such a test, it needs no other proof of its truth. What, then, is the question at issue between them? It is the great question, what a man ought to be and what he ought to pursue all his life long. Callicles, in answering the questions of Socrates, maintains natural justice to be that the better, superior, and stronger should rule over, and have more than, the worse, inferior, and weaker. And by this he does not mean the numerically or physically 'stronger,' or those who are 'superior' in certain particular kinds of knowledge, but he means (for he will speak out) that the right and natural principle of life is for a man to let his appetites be as great as possible, and to have the wisdom and the courage to satisfy them. Most people cannot do this, and so they abuse those who can; but, for a man who had the power, nothing could be baser than continence. The truth is (and Socrates professes to seek truth) that luxury, licence, and freedom are virtue and happiness; all this other finery, this unnatural conventionality, is worthless nonsense of man's invention[1].

Socrates is glad that Callicles has spoken out. The ideal man, then, is he who has the greatest appetites and can satisfy them; to call a man happy who had no wants would seem to Callicles as reasonable as to call a stone or a corpse happy. But suppose the truth were, as Euripides says, that death is life, and that it is we who are really the dead? There is an old philosophical allegory which says that the body is a tomb in which the soul is buried out of sight; the soul of the unwise (the 'uninitiated,' this allegory calls them) is like a sieve, because it retains nothing; and the appetitive part of

[1] *Gorgias*, 486 D–492 C.

the soul is like a pitcher with a hole in it, because it is never filled, and its opinions are always going up and down; and in the unseen world the life of the uninitiated is of all the most miserable, for they are always carrying water in a leaking sieve to fill their leaking pitcher. If this quaint conceit does not convince Callicles that the life of order and contentment is better than that of insatiate licence, here is another image from the same school. Suppose two men with a number of pitchers for wine, honey, milk, and other liquors, and that the liquors are very scarce and hard to get; suppose that the one man's pitchers are sound and full, and he has no more to think about, while those of the other are rotten and leaky, and he has to keep filling them night and day, or suffer torments of thirst: which is the happier life? Callicles still holds that the first of the two is the life of a stone; the more there is to flow in, the greater the pleasure. Yes, is the answer, but the more there flows in, the more there must flow out; such a life is the life of a cormorant[1].

But what appetites does Callicles refer to? To be consistent, he is ready to include all, even the foulest; he will say that the good and the pleasant are absolutely identical. But can this be? For, firstly, Callicles will admit courage and knowledge to be not identical either with each other or with pleasure; how then can he maintain good to be identical with pleasure? Secondly, he will admit that well-faring and ill-faring, good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, are as opposite to each other as health and disease, strength and weakness, quickness and slowness; and that it is as impossible for any one to fare well and ill simultaneously, or to cease faring well

[1] *Gorgias*, 492 D–494 B.

and ill simultaneously, as it is to be healthy and diseased, or to cease being healthy and diseased, simultaneously; yet a person who is thirsty and drinks feels pain and pleasure simultaneously, and ceases to feel them simultaneously. Thirdly, he will admit that what he calls 'good' men are made good by the presence of good things, as it is the presence of beauty which makes beautiful things beautiful; and he does not call cowards and fools good men; yet cowards and fools, as he allows, experience at least as much pleasure and pain as the brave and wise; if, then, pleasure and pain are good and evil, and the presence of them makes those who feel them good or bad, we shall have to say that bad men are as good and as bad as good men[1].

Callicles, who has only been answering such petti-fogging questions to please Gorgias and to satisfy Socrates' childish love of argument, now announces that of course he, like everybody else, thinks some pleasures better than others. There are, then, Socrates pursues, good and bad pleasures, that is, pleasures which do good and pleasures which do harm; and so with pains. And this good which they do is what makes us choose and do pleasant and painful things; that is, we choose pleasure for the sake of good, not good for the sake of pleasure. Now this choosing is clearly not a thing in the power of every one; it requires a man who has the art. And this brings us back to the distinction made before between the empiricism of the confectioner, for instance, and the art of the physician. To this distinction Socrates begs Callicles to attend seriously, for, unless they agree about it, they cannot settle the question at issue—the question, which life they ought to try to live, the political life of

[1] *Gorgias*, 494 B–499 B.

Callicles or the philosophic life of Socrates. The ground of the distinction, then, is this. There are two methods of treating the soul ; the one, which aims at what is best for the soul, investigates the nature of its subject-matter, and can give an account of its own processes ; the other, which aims only at giving pleasure, that is, at flattery, has never investigated the nature and cause of pleasure, or attempted to classify it into better and worse ; it is a mere rule of thumb, based upon memory of what usually occurs. Instances of the second kind of method are, in Socrates' opinion, all such arts as those of public players and singers, of dithyrambic and even of tragic poets ; since tragedy, for all its grand air, never declines to say what pleases the populace on the ground that it is bad for them, and, if divested of melody, rhythm, and metre, is only a sort of mob-oratory and rhetoric. And what are we to say of rhetoric proper? To which method does it belong? [1]

Callicles would make a distinction ; some rhetoricians, he thinks, have no care for the good of the citizens in what they say, but there are some who do care. He cannot indeed mention any such now living, but from what he hears he believes that Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades, and Pericles were good men, and made the Athenians better. Socrates cannot think so, unless goodness means indiscriminate satisfaction of appetite ; otherwise, which of these men answers to the requirements of a good rhetorician? A man who in speaking aims at what is best will not speak at random, but with something in view. This is true of all artists—painters, architects, shipbuilders, and the rest ; they do not put their materials together at random, but in a certain order, compelling

[1] *Gorgias*, 499 B–502 E.

one piece to fit with another so that their work may have a definite form. And in the same way trainers and physicians, in treating the body, try to organize it and put it in order. It is this presence of order which distinguishes a good ship or house from a bad one, and if we are consistent we must say the same of the soul. Health is the name given to order in the body; law, resulting in justice and temperance, to that in the soul. To produce this order, then, will be the aim of the 'good and artistic' speaker in all that he says and does; and, if the soul which he addresses be in a bad state, he will only indulge those appetites which are good for it, and will restrain the others, just as the physician does with the diseased body. Restraint, therefore, must be better for the soul than the absolute licence which Callicles considered happiness[1].

First, then (since Callicles here declines to answer any more, and advises Socrates to finish his argument by himself), let us recapitulate our results. The good and the pleasant are not the same, and the pleasant must be done for the sake of the good. Everything, natural and artificial, soul and body, is made good by the presence of its own virtue, and is given by this virtue its proper order, rightness, art. The good soul is that which has this order, that is, which is temperate. Such a soul will behave in the right way to men, gods, and circumstances, and will therefore be just, religious, and brave. This is perfect goodness, and goodness is well-being, and well-being is happiness. Temperance, therefore, is the mark at which a man must aim if he would be happy, and licence is what he must fly from. The robber's life of unrestrained appetite makes communion, and therefore

[1] *Gorgias*, 503 A–505 B.

friendship, impossible, either with gods or men[1]. It is friendship, orderliness, temperance, and justice which, as wise men tell us, hold together heaven and earth and men and gods, and this is why they call the universe 'order' (cosmos); Callicles has not sufficiently realized the 'power of geometrical equality.' And, if these things are true, it follows that the paradoxes of Socrates, and the concessions forced from Gorgias and Polus, are true also, and the helplessness to resist injustice, which Callicles called so shameful, is not so shameful as the doing of the injustice. These consequences seem to Socrates to be 'riveted with reasons of iron and adamant'; he only knows that he has never yet found anybody who could 'undo' them. And, if this is so, of all kinds of helplessness the most shameful is to be unable to help ourselves or our friends not to do injustice[2].

There are, then, two evils, doing injustice and suffering it; and the first is the greater. By what means can we protect ourselves against them? It clearly is not enough merely to 'wish' not to suffer injustice; and, as we saw in the argument with Polus, nobody 'wishes' to do it; the avoidance of both evils, therefore, implies some power or art. The way to avoid suffering injustice is either to rule in the state ourselves, or to be the friends of those who rule. And to be their friends we must be as like them as possible: if we are much better than they, they will fear us; if much worse, they will despise us. But the way to escape doing injustice will be the opposite of this: imitation of those in power would be the very way to do the most of it, and to ruin one's soul. Socrates does not want telling that the man who

[1] Cp. *Republic*, i. 351 B–352 B. [2] *Gorgias*, 505 C–509 C.

takes the second way will be at the mercy of the man who takes the first; but what of that? Is it our sole business to keep ourselves alive as long as possible? If Callicles thinks so much of rhetoric, why does he think so little of such arts as swimming, navigation, or military engineering? Do they not save life, and in some cases a great deal more than life? The pilot brings us all the way from Egypt to Athens for two drachmae, and does not give himself airs in consequence. How, indeed, can he be sure that it would not have been better for us if he had left us in the sea? The engineer does not preach to us all to become engineers, and yet he saves the lives of a whole city. Why does Callicles despise him, and refuse to marry his daughter? 'Because Callicles is a better man, and better born.' But, if goodness consists in keeping life alive at all costs, how is Callicles better? The truth is, no one who is really a man thinks about how long he is to live; he leaves that to God, knowing, as women say, that 'we must all die some time'; what he thinks about is, how he can best spend the time that is given him. Shall we then get power at the peril of our souls, and make ourselves as like the Athenian people as we can? For assuredly there is no other art or device by which a man can succeed as a politician and rhetorician, as Callicles understands success[1].

Let us recall what we said before about the two methods of treating souls, the one aiming at giving them pleasure, the other at making them better. Clearly the latter must be the method of the true politician; for what is the good of giving people wealth or power before their minds are in a good condition? Now, supposing

[1] *Gorgias*, 509 C–513 C.

we were trying for the place of architect or physician to the state, we should ask ourselves, firstly, Have we learnt architecture or medicine? and secondly, What buildings have we produced, or what patients have we treated, and are the buildings good or bad, the patients better or worse? So with politics, which Callicles is just taking up himself, and exhorts Socrates to take up; must we not ask, Is there any one in Athens who was bad before —unjust, licentious, foolish,—and whom Callicles has made good? Let us apply this test to the men whom he mentioned as instances of good citizens, Pericles, Cimon, Miltiades, Themistocles. Were the Athenians better at the end of Pericles' career than at the beginning? Socrates has been told that they were worse; that Pericles, by his system of public payments, made them idlers, cowards, babblers, money-lovers. And, if this is a conservative calumny, it is at any rate a fact that, while Pericles began by being popular, towards the end of his life he was condemned for embezzlement and nearly put to death. Surely, if he had been a good statesman, he ought to have made the creatures under his management more tame and just instead of more wild and unjust; at least, that is what we should expect from a man who had to manage asses or horses or oxen. The same thing is shown by the ostracism of Cimon, the banishment of Themistocles, the condemnation of Miltiades; it is not the good driver who waits to be upset until he has had a long time for improving himself and his horses[1].

We may repeat, therefore, that 'we know of no one in this state who has been a good statesman,' and of the men whom Callicles instanced we must say that,

[1] *Gorgias*, 513 C–516 E.

if they were rhetoricians, they understood neither true rhetoric nor the rhetoric of flattery. No doubt, as Callicles urges, they achieved greater things than any living statesman; but this only means that they were better 'ministers' to the state—that is, to the passions and appetites of its members; in controlling and directing such appetites they were no better. They were men who seem to Socrates to have done for the state much what our great cooks and bakers and wine-dealers do for our bodies; they add flesh to them, but at the expense of the flesh we had before; and when we get ill long afterwards, instead of blaming them, we blame those who happen to be advising us at the moment. So with the state. The men who fed it up and made it great with trash like harbours, docks, walls, and revenues, with no virtue in them, are glorified by the present generation, who do not see that it is swollen and festering; and, when the crisis of the disease comes, they will continue to praise Themistocles, and Cimon, and Pericles, who are the causes of the evil, and they will lay hands on men like Callicles and Alcibiades, who are partly perhaps, but not wholly, responsible for it[1].

Nor have public men any right to complain so bitterly as they do of the injustice with which they are treated by their country, to which they claim to have done so much good. They are as unreasonable as the sophists, who profess to teach virtue, and then accuse their pupils of wronging them by their ingratitude. If they have put justice into them, how can it issue in injustice? And, though Callicles objects to putting statesmen and rhetoricians on the same level with sophists, Socrates can see scarcely any difference between them; indeed, he

[1] *Gorgias*, 517 A–519 B.

puts sophistic above rhetoric, as he puts the legislative art above the judicial, and gymnastic above medicine. Surely public speakers and sophists are just the persons who cannot blame those whom they educate, without at the same time condemning their own incompetence. They are also the only persons who ought to be able to dispense with a fixed charge for their services; for, if they succeed in removing injustice, there is no fear of their not being justly requited. This seems to be the reason why the only advice for which it is thought dishonourable to demand money is advice how to be a good man and citizen: it is the only form of benefit which must make the recipient wish to return it; and, if he does not, it is a sign that the benefit has not been conferred[1].

And now which method of treatment does Callicles advise Socrates to adopt—that of fighting with the Athenians to make them as good as possible, or that of ministering to their pleasures? Callicles still advises the second; he wonders that Socrates is so confident and does not see that he is at the mercy of any scoundrel who likes to accuse him. Socrates, comes the answer, is wise enough to know that in Athens anything may happen to anybody; nevertheless, he knows that he is innocent, and that no good man would accuse him. But, indeed, he would not be surprised if he were put to death, for 'he believes himself to be almost, if not quite, the only man in Athens who attempts the true art of politics'; and so, if he is brought before a court of justice, he will be like a physician put on his trial by a confectioner before a court of children; he will not be able to say that he has provided them with pleasures, and if he says the truth, that all his questionings and harsh criticisms were

[1] *Gorgias*, 519 B-520 E.

for their good, who will listen to him? Still, whatever Callicles may think, this is not the helplessness of which a man need be ashamed; the only help worth having is that which comes from having lived righteously; to die for want of that help would indeed be grievous, but to die for want of flattering rhetoric is nothing. No one can fear death itself, unless he be utterly unthinking and unmanly; but to go to the other world with his soul loaded with injustice, that is what every one must fear[1].

Listen to a story of these things (Callicles will think it only a story, but it is true nevertheless). In the reign of Cronos it was the law of the gods, as it still is, that those men who have lived righteously should go to the islands of the blessed and live in happiness, and those, who have lived unrighteously, to Tartarus, the prison-house of punishment. Formerly men used to be judged alive, and on the day on which they were to die; and the judges also were alive. The consequence was that the wrong persons often went to the wrong place; for those who came for judgment came clothed in their bodies and riches and rank, and there were witnesses with them to witness to their good lives; the judges too had to judge through the veil of their eyes and ears and bodies. Hearing this, Zeus first made Prometheus take away from men the power of foreseeing their deaths; and then he ordained that, when they came to be judged, they should be dead, naked, and alone, and that the judges also should be dead and naked, so that soul might see into soul. From this story we may draw the following conclusions. Death is nothing but the separation of soul and body; and when they are separated each retains the characteristics which it had during life; if

[1] *Gorgias*, 520 E–522 E.

the body was large or stout or scarred or maimed in life, it remains so for a time after death; and in the same way the soul, when stripped of the body, shows all the marks of its nature and habits. The judge, then, when it comes before him, does not know whose soul it is; it may be that of the Great King himself; but, when he looks at it, he sees perhaps that it is full of scars and crookedness and disproportion, where perjury and injustice, falsehood and conceit, wantonness and licence, have left their marks; and he sends it away in dishonour to be punished. Punishment has two ends, to improve and to warn. Those who are punished for their good are those whose sins are curable, though only by suffering both in this world and the next; for suffering is the only way of getting rid of injustice. Incurable sinners are punished, not for their own good, but for that of others, to whom they are 'hung up in Hades as warnings,' suffering torments for ever. Most of them have been tyrants, kings or rulers, for they, having the greatest power, commit the greatest sins. Not but that there have been and will be good rulers and kings, and these deserve all our admiration, for it is hard for a man to live uprightly when he has great power to do wrong; Aristides is one famous instance of a man who was able to deal justly with whatever was put into his hands. When, then, the judge sees a wicked soul, all that he knows is that it is wicked, and he marks it as curable or incurable and sends it to Tartarus; and when he finds a soul that has lived a righteous life, the life perhaps of a single-minded philosopher, he sends it with admiration to the islands of the blessed[1].

Socrates is persuaded of the truth of these sayings,

[1] *Gorgias*, 522 E–526 D.

and is seeking how he may present his soul to the judge as healthy as possible. With this end he puts aside the honours of the world, and strives, by looking for the truth, to live and die as good a man as he can. This is the prize which he would call Callicles and the rest of mankind to live for; it is worth all other prizes; and it will be shame to Callicles if he is helpless when he comes before the judge, and stands as dizzy and gaping there as Socrates would do here. This may all seem to him an old wives' tale, but have we found anything better? Three of the wisest living men in Greece—Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles—have been unable to prove that any life is worth living but that which profits hereafter. And, of all the theories which we have heard, the only one which has not been shaken is this: that to do injustice is worse than to suffer it; that the best thing is to be just, and the next best thing to be made just by punishment; that we must fly from all flattery of ourselves and of others, and that we must use rhetoric, and everything else that we touch, in the service of justice. This, if Callicles will believe it, is the only road to happiness, both in life and after death. If he will follow this with Socrates, he need not fear being despised and insulted, for nothing will be able to hurt him. And, when they have completed their training in virtue, then it will be time to think of taking to politics and offering advice; at present they have so neglected their education that on the greatest subjects they never think the same thing twice. The best life is to live and die in the practice of virtue: let this principle be our light and guide, not the principle in which Callicles put his trust, for that is worth nothing[1].

As a masterpiece of writing, the *Gorgias* must speak

[1] *Gorgias*, 526 D–527 E.

for itself; its effect can only be weakened by comment. All that is necessary here is to draw attention to the logic of its conclusion, which is liable to be obscured by the very force with which it is expressed. The issue in which the dialogue culminates is that between the life of 'philosophy' and the life of 'politics.' The antithesis thus stated suggests to modern ears that between speculation and action, or (still more misleadingly) that between theory and practice. But consideration shows that Plato is not here opposing the scientific investigator of politics to the working statesman, still less the academic to the parliamentary politician. The true modern equivalent to the opposition which he has in his mind is that between principle and no principle. The question which he puts to the various advocates of power and pleasure is this: 'When you say that power and pleasure are the best things, the things most worth having, do you really mean power and pleasure as such, the mere capacity to do anything and everything, the mere sensibility to any and every pleasant feeling; or do you mean power to do and feel something which (for whatever reason) you consider good? If the latter (and the latter is what you *must* mean), then you have admitted some other principle of life than the mere capacity of feeling or doing what pleases you.' The fact that there is some other principle than this, or rather that the only possible *principle* is something other than this, is to Plato the central fact, which alone makes life and the world intelligible. Wherever he looks, to the work of the artist, the doctor, the mechanic, to the constitution of human society, to the operations of nature, he finds that success, excellence, well-being, depend upon, or rather are identical with, the observance

of a certain order or law. What the particular order is, and what the particular excellence of which it is the condition, depends on the nature of the thing in question; bodily health and moral goodness, beauty and utility, are different excellences expressing different orders; the all-important point to Plato is that they do express an order, and that only so far as they express it are they good.

If this is the ultimate truth of things, and if 'philosophy' is simply the operative love of truth, the 'philosophic' life will be the life lived in the continual and growing consciousness of this truth; in the consciousness that, whatever we have to deal with, be it a house or a living body, the physical universe or human society, we shall deal with it successfully just in proportion as we recognize that it has a principle of its own, and deal with it upon that principle. The 'philosophic' statesman, then, is not the man who spends his time in dreaming of utopias, but the man who takes for his aim, not to please, but to make men better, and who realizes that, while the former aim consistently carried out must dissipate itself in an aimless empiricism, the latter, starting with the recognition of reason as the primary factor in things, leads to greater and greater concentration of all effort in a more and more comprehensive end. In such a conception there is not necessarily involved any antagonism to active political life; the antagonism is to a political rule of thumb, which regards, not the permanent interests of the people at large, but a transitory fragment of their nervous susceptibilities. It is true that Plato, when he wrote the *Gorgias*, was convinced that nearly all the great Athenian statesmen had failed of his ideal; and he no doubt regarded the execution of Socrates as a crown-

ing proof of the triumph of that evil spirit in politics which seemed to him to have been silently gathering strength since the days of Miltiades and Themistocles. To philosophers, as to other men, theories are the interpretation of their experience; and, however true a principle of interpretation may be, the interpretation itself will always have a strong personal colouring. We are here concerned, not to judge Plato's judgment of Pericles in the *Gorgias*, but to understand the conception of statesmanship, and of human life generally, upon which his judgment was formed.

Philebus.

That conception receives new light and development from the *Philebus*, a dialogue in most ways so unlike the *Gorgias* that the agreement of the two in certain important points is the more striking. The *Philebus* is almost as remarkable for the absence, as the *Gorgias* is for the presence, of moral inspiration and dramatic power. The style seldom escapes from a cumbrous obscurity, and only here and there are the claims of pleasure to be the end of life combated with vehemence. The practical consequences of the doctrine are kept in the background, and the argument moves in a region of metaphysical and psychological analysis, the bearing of which upon the original question is often dubious or remote. Yet, under these differences of tone and treatment, the ground upon which the issue is decided is substantially the same as in the *Gorgias*. If the latter dialogue insists that life implies principle, and that power and pleasure as such cannot be made to yield a principle, the *Philebus* shows that the good cannot be found in mere feeling, because mere feeling is, strictly speaking, nothing, and gets whatever form or quality it

has from something other than feeling. And again, as in the *Gorgias* the evidence of reason in the world and human life is found in a certain order or law which determines otherwise random elements, so in the *Philebus* reality in general, and human consciousness in particular, are represented as an unquantified and unqualified matter which is continually taking definite character under the formative action of mind. Lastly, the conclusion suggested by the *Gorgias*, that the goodness of a thing is identical with its realized end or full reality, is explicitly developed in the *Philebus*, where it is finally affirmed that the divine good in the world is manifested under the triple form of measure, beauty, and truth.

The question asked in the *Philebus* is one with which we are already familiar, What is the 'condition of soul which can make human life happy'? or, What is the 'best thing that a man can have,' in other words, 'the good'? But the particular manner in which this question is treated will seem strange, and perhaps uninstructive, to a modern reader. The whole dialogue is dominated by an idea peculiarly Greek, and foreign, at least in this form, to the mind of Northern Europe. It has become almost a commonplace of modern culture to contrast the Greek view of life with its love of perfect attainment, and our own with its unsatisfied aspiration.

> 'To-day's brief passion limits their range;
> It seethes with the morrow for us, and more.
> They are perfect—how else? they shall never change:
> We are faulty—why not? we have time in store.'

There is truth in this contrast; but it would be very misleading to suppose that, because the Greeks chose words like 'measure,' 'limit,' 'mean,' to express perfection, they were devoid of what we call a 'sense of

the infinite.' Assuredly the philosopher who wrote the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, who could speak of the longing of the soul to fly away and be at rest in its lost 'heaven' of truth, or to abandon itself to the 'great sea' of beauty, cannot have been the victim of a self-satisfied formalism. Much confusion would be avoided if it were remembered that 'limit' may mean either that to which we are always getting, or that beyond which we never get; in the first sense it is the condition of progress, in the second its negation. To the Greeks it meant primarily the first, to us it means primarily the second.

The leading idea of the *Philebus*, divested of its peculiar phraseology, is as follows. All existence, human life and the life of nature alike, is a continual process or movement; but it is a process which is being continually arrested. The formless and timeless stream of being, which we can only conceive as the negation of all that we know, is for ever taking shape, and becoming a describable and comprehensible world of things and events. The blank monotony differentiates itself, the chaotic multiplicity falls asunder into groups; sound becomes rhythmical, speech articulate, time is measured, temperance is graduated; human life, physical, intellectual, and moral, rises and falls according to laws of its own, which the doctor calls health, the philosopher truth, the moralist virtue. From such a point of view existence may be described as a perpetual resultant of two factors, a negative and a positive, that which is never anything in particular, and that which is ever making it something. Take any object or event, and try to characterize it; each new quality which it exhibits gives it a fresh hold in the surrounding void; on this side and on that, before and behind, welters a dim space which

becomes ever dimmer with distance; but here, at this point, there is fixity and limit, here the potential emerges into actuality, here the nothing has come to be something. The productive, formative force, which is the source of the positive and characteristic element in things, Plato calls reason or mind. The rationality of the world seems to him to lie in its being measurable, rhythmical, articulate; to understand any part of it is to find its unit of measurement or to trace the lines of its structure, and each new discovery is the reduction of a new piece of chaos to order. The idea of measure has to him something of the power and charm which invest the modern idea of law. The measure of a thing is its reality, its true self; that which has no measure is neither anything itself, nor can it be brought into any relation with other things; to fulfil its own measure, to be entirely what it is meant to be, and neither to exceed nor fall short of its place in the great whole of which 'God is the measure[1]'—this is to obey the law of its existence both for itself and for others.

In the particular sphere of human life the indeterminate and negative element of existence is the stream of feeling, so far as we can conceive it as absolutely devoid of order, direction, or result. So conceived it is, indeed, a mere abstraction, for no named or nameable feeling is of this utterly characterless nature; it is always feeling *of* or *about* something, and this something is what qualifies it. The two feelings called pleasure and pain are, according to Plato's view, feelings which accompany the restoration and the disintegration of the normal harmony or balance of the animal organism; pleasure is the sense of rising to a higher grade of vitality, pain the sense of falling

[1] *Laws*, iv. 716 C.

from a grade to which we had risen. The character of both is given to them by the points between which they move. If they were consciousness of mere process, from nothing and to nothing, they would not, strictly speaking, be states of consciousness at all; if, on the other hand, life were not a process, if we were not always coming to be or ceasing to be, we should not have the specific feelings of pleasure and pain, we should have the sense of continual being, which now we can only have at moments. The contrast between Plato and the modern mind may be expressed by saying that the former loves to dwell upon the sense of attainment in life, the latter upon the sense of movement. The one says, 'Be your true self'; the other, 'Be better than you are.' The latter abhors a dead level, the former a motiveless change. We, like Callicles in the *Gorgias*[1], are inclined to ask whether a life without either pleasure or pain is life at all, because we instinctively think of it as a compromise between the two, not as something above both. To enjoy the sense of rising is doubtless better than never to wish to rise, but to live permanently at the height is better than either, and only does not seem so because we are so incapable of experiencing it. And if it be asked, What is the thing most worth having in the world? we can only answer in terms which give the priority, not to mere pleasurable feeling of process, but to that which we come to be in the process. If the end of our being is to be, to be the utmost we are capable of being, then the higher the constant level at which we can live, the less the energy which we have to spend in escaping the pain of depression, the more each moment contains in itself, and the less it borrows from felt contrast with

[1] Above, pp. 292–3.

a lower past or a higher future, the more nearly do we approach the full measure, the full beauty, the full truth, in which, according to the *Philebus*, the principle of good is manifested.

The dialogue opens by asking what is 'the best thing that a man can have.' Three alternatives are first suggested. Is it the sense of pleasure, or is it intellectual truth, or is it something better than either of these[1]? We must begin by investigating the nature of pleasure. For, though it sounds such a simple thing, it is really most complex; the licentious and the temperate, the fool and the wise, severally feel pleasure, but no reasonable person would hold that their pleasures are similar. It may be said, indeed, that though they arise from opposite things they all resemble each other in being pleasure. But it is only very young or very incompetent reasoners who press such resemblances to the denial of all difference; and, if we would not drive logic into illogicality, we must admit that both in knowledge and pleasure there are differences, and that each, though one, is also many. Indeed, the truth is that this coexistence of unity and multiplicity, though a standing crux of logic, is an inherent attribute of all reality. Everything of which we say 'it is' will be found to be both one and many, and to have in it a determining and an indeterminate element. To understand a thing is to see, not merely that it is one or that it is indefinitely manifold, but that its unity falls into two or more other unities, and each of these again into others, and so on until no further articulations can be detected; or, again, to see that its indefinite multiplicity falls into definite groups, and each group into other groups, until we arrive at

[1] *Philebus*, 11 A–12 B, and 19 C–20 C.

units forming the groups. And so, before we can answer the question whether pleasure or knowledge is the good, we should be able to classify their kinds, and say into how many forms the indeterminate unity of each is determined [1].

On reflexion, however, it appears that 'the good' cannot be either pleasure or knowledge, but must be something other and better than either. For by 'the good' we all understand something complete and sufficing, something which all desire to have, and without which they care to have nothing. Now neither a life of pleasure alone nor a life of intelligence alone satisfies these requirements. A life of pleasure entirely without intelligence would be the life of an oyster, not of a man; we should neither know, conceive, remember, nor anticipate our pleasure. On the other hand, no one would choose the possession of all intelligence without any feelings of pleasure and pain. Every one would prefer to either life a life which combined both. The good, therefore, cannot be identical either with pleasure or with reason (not at least with human reason, for with the divine reason it may be otherwise); and the only question can be, which of the two contributes more to the good which is realized in their combination? Neither can have the first prize; which is to have the second? [2]

Now, human life is a form of being: what *is* being? Everything of which we say 'it is' will be found to be a resultant of 'the indeterminate' or 'limitless' and 'determination' or 'limit.' The 'indeterminate' may be described as that which has no quantitative limit, but is in continual process of increase and decrease, always a 'more' or a 'less,' never a 'so much.' Examples of

[1] *Philebus*, 12 B–19 B. [2] *Ib.* 20 B–22 D.

'determination' are number and measure, and everything which puts a stop to the difference of opposites, such as more and less, and makes them measurable and comparable. Wherever these two elements combine, the result is a third form of being different from either; and the indeterminate process now comes to be a determinate something. Thus it is the introduction of determination into indeterminate tone and time which produces music; and from similar combinations result the temperature of the seasons, the health, beauty, and strength of the body, law and order in the soul, and innumerable other good things. Lastly, whatever comes into being must have a cause—in other words, must be produced by something; and it is in the nature of things that that which produces is prior to that which is produced; the former leads, the latter obeys. We must therefore distinguish cause as a fourth element from the other three[1].

Let us now apply this analysis to the question at issue. The life of combined pleasure and reason in which we have placed the good must, like all other complex forms of existence, involve determination of an indeterminate element. Of its two constituent factors pleasure clearly belongs to the indeterminate, for it is something which, in itself and as such, has neither beginning, middle, nor end. If it be said that its indeterminateness is just what makes it good, it must be answered that it is the same indeterminateness which makes pain evil; therefore whatever good there may be in pleasure must come from some other source[2]. Reason, on the other hand, would seem to be of the nature of cause. It is an old theory of some philosophers that mind is the king of heaven and earth, and it seems impossible to suppose that the universe is

[1] *Philebus*, 23 B–27 C. [2] Cp. *ib.* 31 A and 32 B.

regulated by irrational chance. Moreover, when we compare the elements of body (fire, water, air, and earth), as they exist in us, with these same elements as they exist in the universe, we see that the former are very much poorer in amount and force than the latter, by which they are produced, sustained, and controlled. The same is true of body as a whole; our body depends on the body of the universe, not that of the universe on ours. Our body, again, is endowed with soul; and must not the same considerations apply to that? Whence could we get it, unless the body of the universe were endowed with soul, as good as ours and better? Surely we cannot suppose that the cause which works in us under the name of wisdom, keeping our body alive and in health and harmony, is not also working on a correspondingly grander scale in the grander field of the universe. We may say, then, that the determining and indeterminate elements are present all through the world, and we may call the mighty cause which orders them the sovereign mind, residing in the sovereign soul of Zeus. Reason in man, then, would seem to be essentially causative, and akin to the divine reason which creates and sustains the world[1].

Having thus determined the generic character of reason and pleasure in themselves, let us go on to examine the sphere and occasions of their occurrence in human life. Pleasure and pain (to take them first) occur in connexion with the third form of being of which we spoke, that in which determination combines with an indeterminate. In all living things there is a natural harmony, implying, like all harmony, a certain determination of an indeterminate; when this harmony is being broken up, pain

[1] *Philebus*, 27 C–31 A.

takes place; when it is being restored, pleasure. If there were neither restoration nor disintegration going on, the animal would feel neither pleasure nor pain, and that is just the condition which we described above as the life of pure reason: we may find eventually that this is the most divine life of all; anyhow, we cannot without impropriety think of the gods as feeling pleasure or the reverse[1]. One form of pleasure and pain, then, is that which accompanies the processes of bodily restoration and disintegration; a second form is that which accompanies the anticipation of such processes by the soul itself without the body. This takes place through memory: the soul retains the sensation of something which it experienced with the body, and recovers it without the body. This is the explanation of appetite, which is really a thing of the soul, not of the body; for appetite is an impulse towards a state the opposite of that in which the body is at the moment, and this is only possible through memory[2]. A third form is that in which pain of body is accompanied by pleasure of soul, that is, by a memory of pleasant things which would relieve the pain[3].

So much for the circumstances under which pleasure and pain occur: let us now apply these observations to determine the relative truth or falsity of the pleasures and pains which we have been describing. And, first, we must ask in what senses we can speak of things like pain and pleasure, fear and hope, being false. We conceive, indeed, that in dreams or madness a person may think that he feels pleasure and yet not do so; but are we right in this? Let us compare pleasure with thought.

[1] *Philebus*, 31 B–33 C. [2] *Ib.* 33 C–35 D.
[3] *Ib.* 35 D–36 B.

There is that which thinks and that which is thought, and there is that which feels pleasure and that at which the pleasure is felt; and as the thinking subject really thinks, whether it thinks rightly or not, so the pleased subject is really pleased, whether the pleasure be rightly felt or not. If, then, truth and falsity are attributes of thought, why should they not be equally attributes of pleasure, in spite of the fact that all pleasure is in a sense real? Or is it the case that pleasure and pain do not admit of qualification at all, but are simply what they are? Clearly not, for we speak of them as great, small, or intense; we admit that the addition of badness makes them bad; and we cannot deny that a mistaken opinion as to their object makes them mistaken. If it still be maintained that in the last case it is the opinion which is false, not the pleasure, it must at least be allowed that there is a great difference between pleasure accompanied by right opinion or knowledge, and pleasure accompanied by false opinion or ignorance; the difference is that, while in both cases the pleasure is really felt, in the former it is felt at a real, in the latter at an unreal, object.

We may exemplify opinion thus. We see something, ask ourselves what it is, and say to ourselves, 'It is so and so.' The soul may here be compared to a book, on which a present sensation, coalescing with a remembered sensation, writes certain words. This act of writing is followed (to use another metaphor) by an act of picturing, whereby the objects of the opinion are detached from the original sensations, and their images transferred to the soul. If what is thus written in the soul represents the truth, the opinion is true, and, if the opinion is true, the corresponding images are true. Now these psychical affections relate to future things as well as to present and

past, and there are corresponding pleasures and pains of anticipation; a man, for instance, may enjoy the picture of himself enjoying a future pleasure. Human life is thronged with such pictures of hope; if a man is good and beloved by the gods, his pictures are probably true; if not, false. This, then, is one sense in which pleasure and pain (and similarly fear, anger, and other feelings), though really felt, may be untrue; we may express it by saying that the truth or falsity of opinion infects feeling. Whether falsity in pleasure is equivalent to badness, as it is in opinion, is a question which we need not discuss at present [1].

A second form in which we may experience false pleasures is that in which feeling infects opinion. We saw above that when we feel appetite we may feel pain and pleasure simultaneously, pain from the present bodily affection, pleasure from the remembered and expected relief. We also saw that pleasure and pain are essentially indeterminate. Suppose then that we wish, as we often do in such cases, to judge which is the greater, a pleasure or a pain, how are we to do it? We find that their magnitude, like that of objects of sight, appears to vary with their position; they seem greater when looked at nearer, less when further off, and greater again when looked at side by side with each other. If then, we cut off from each the apparent excess or defect, we must say that both the appearance and the corresponding amount of feeling are wrong and untrue [2].

Following out this idea of the relativity of pleasure and pain to one another, we find that they admit of still greater degrees of falsity, so much so, indeed, that some

[1] *Philebus*, 36 C–41 A.

[2] *Ib.* 41 A–42 A. Cp. *Protagoras*, 352 D–357 A.

philosophers have been led to deny the reality of pleasure altogether. They maintain that what is called pleasure is a mere illusion, being really nothing but the sense of relief from pain. The antipathy of these philosophers to pleasure is based, not upon knowledge, but upon a sort of instinct, a noble instinct, which makes them distrust pleasure in every form. Without agreeing with them, we may use their theory to illustrate the possible falsity of pleasure. What they say is this. If we wanted to know the real nature of anything, of hardness for instance, we should examine the hardest things that we could find ; and we must do the same with pleasure. Now the greatest (i. e. the intensest) pleasures are those of the body ; and these are greater in proportion as the appetites which precede them are greater ; that is, they are greater in diseased than in healthy bodies, and in intemperate than temperate souls. Now what makes us call them the 'greatest' pleasures is the fact that they are mixed with pain. Such mixtures of feeling may be in the body itself, or in the soul itself, or in both together. An instance of the first kind is itching ; of the second, the feelings which we have in seeing tragedy or comedy acted ; and of the third, the cases in which a sense of want coexists with a prospect of satisfaction. In such combinations as come under the first head, the pain may be greater than the pleasure, as when an itch is deep-seated and can only be partially removed by rubbing ; or it may be less, in which case the pleasure gives rise to the most ungovernable effects in colour, gesture, and voice, and makes us say that we are 'almost dying' of delight. The more witless and licentious a man is, the more he pursues such pleasures[1].

[1] *Philebus*, 42 C–47 C.

So much for mixed pleasures of the body: we have already spoken[1] of the cases in which body and soul are oppositely affected: it remains to consider the mixture within the soul itself. Anger, fear, regret, grief, love, envy, jealousy and the like, are pains of the soul; yet we find them often accompanied by great pleasure. 'Wrath,' says Achilles, 'is sweeter than honey,' and in seeing a tragedy acted we feel pleasure at the same moment that we weep. The pleasure of comedy, too, is similarly, though less obviously, mixed; what we laugh at as comic is the harmless conceit of our neighbours arising from their self-ignorance, which makes them think themselves richer, handsomer, or cleverer, than they really are; in the jealous irritation which we feel at this conceit we are pained, but in laughing at it we are pleased. The same applies to 'the whole tragedy and comedy of real life'; and a similar mixture might be shown in the other emotions which we mentioned[2].

We have seen that many so-called pleasures are not really pleasures at all, while others appear greater than they are through being mixed with pains. We do not however agree with the theory that *all* pleasure is cessation from pain; there are also true or unmixed pleasures, and to these we now pass. Pure pleasures, then, are such as accompany the satisfaction of wants of which we are not conscious, or not painfully conscious. Such are the pleasures associated with beautiful colours and forms, sounds and scents. By beauty of form we are not to understand beauty of living things or their copies, but that of straight lines and curves, and the planes and solids formed from them; these are beautiful, not relatively, but in themselves, and the corresponding pleasures

[1] *Philebus*, 35 D–36 C. [2] *Ib.* 47 D–50 E.

are pleasant in themselves. The same is true of smooth clear sounds of one pure tone, and of the analogous colours. The pleasures of smell are 'less divine' than these, but resemble them in not necessarily implying pain. To these we must add the pleasures of knowledge, for neither the getting nor the losing of knowledge is accompanied by a painful sense of want, except as a result of reflexion[1].

We have thus got a division of pleasures into pure and impure. The latter or intense kind is obviously of the nature of the indeterminate and unmeasured, the former of the measured; while, as regards their comparative truth, we see that, as a little pure white is whiter, truer, and more beautiful of its kind than a great deal which is impure, so a little unmixed pleasure will be pleasanter, truer, and more beautiful than much mixed[2]. As to the identification of pleasure with the good, we may thankfully apply the theory of those ingenious persons who hold that pleasure has no 'being' but is always 'coming to be.' Things may be divided into those which are self-related and self-contained, and those which relate to, and are in need of, other things; the former are those for which something else exists, the latter those which exist for something else. Being comes under the former, becoming under the latter, head. All things of the nature of remedies, instruments, and material, exist for, and have their end in, something which is coming to be; and all things which are coming to be exist for, and have their end in, something which is. Now that in which things have their end lies in the sphere of the good; that which has its end in something else lies elsewhere. Pleasure, therefore, if it is a process of becoming, has its

[1] *Philebus*, 50 E–52 B. [2] *Ib.* 52 C–53 C.

end in something else and cannot be of the nature of the good ; and those who hold that life is not worth having without hunger, thirst, and similar appetites, the relief of which is such a process, prefer an existence of continual coming and ceasing to be, to one in which there is neither pleasure nor pain, but the purest possible exercise of reason. The absurdity of identifying the good with pleasure appears still further when we consider that it compels us to deny goodness of everything except the soul, and of everything in the soul except pleasure, and moreover to hold a person good and bad in proportion as, and at the times when, he feels and does not feel pleased [1].

Having thus sifted pleasure, we must not spare reason and knowledge, but must free them also from alloy as far as possible, so that when we come to judge between the claimants we may have before us the truest elements of each. What kinds of knowledge, then, are the purest? Knowledge may be divided into professional and educational. Of the professional arts we see that those are the more exact in which there is more numbering, measuring, weighing ; the less of these there is, the more does the art sink into guesswork and empiricism. Thus such arts as carpentry, shipbuilding, and architecture, owing to the numerous instruments which they can use, are more exact than those of music, medicine, agriculture, navigation, and war. Again, there is a difference in clearness and exactness according as the arts of number, measure, and weight are pursued by ordinary people or by philosophers; the former, for example, count with unequal units (two armies, two oxen), while the latter insist that every unit must be equal to every other.

[1] *Philebus*, 53 C–55 C.

These arts, however, even when philosophically pursued, are not the most exact and clear forms of knowledge; the first place must be given to philosophy, the universal science, which is concerned with being as such, in its real and unchangeable nature. Other arts (rhetoric, for instance) may be greater, more popular, more profitable; but, having regard to the love of truth for its own sake, we must consider philosophy to be the purest exercise of reason. Most of the other arts are concerned with the mere opinions of men; even those which investigate nature confine themselves to the processes of the sensible universe, and these, being in perpetual change, do not admit of the truest knowledge. Consistency, truth, and purity, then, must be assigned in the first degree to the thought which is exercised upon things unchangeable or things most akin to these, and can be assigned only in lower degrees to other forms of thought[1].

And now reason and pleasure may be said to lie before us, like material ready for the craftsman to work with. Neither of them alone, as we have seen, satisfies the requirements of the good; the good must be looked for in the mixed life, and presumably in the well-mixed. How then shall we mix them, the honey of pleasure, and the austere water of reason? We shall begin most safely by mixing the truest parts of each; but will these suffice to make a perfect life? No; clearly it is not enough to have the 'divine' knowledge of things as they really are; we must have the every-day 'human' knowledge as well, otherwise we shall not be able to find the way to our own houses. Nor can we dispense with music, unscientific though it is; life would not be life without it. In fact we need not be afraid to admit all

[1] *Philebus*, 55 C–59 D.

forms of knowledge, pure and impure alike. But it will be otherwise with pleasures; when we have taken the true kinds, and have added, as in the case of knowledge, those which are necessary to life, we must stop. For, while pleasure must be the better for having any knowledge for a companion, especially knowledge of itself, it is only true and pure, healthy and temperate, pleasures which are consistent with the exercise of reason; the pleasures of folly and vice only impede and corrupt it. Moreover, truth is indispensable to the combination; nothing would be real without it [1].

And now, assuming our materials to be combined into one organic whole, we may suppose ourselves to be standing before the house where the Good dwells; and we have to ask, Which is the highest element in the combination, and the chief cause of its being universally desirable; and is this element more akin to reason or to pleasure? It is clear that what makes any mixture good is measure and proportion; without these indeed there could be no mixture at all, but only an unmixed conglomerate. Proportion always gives rise to beauty; and truth, we remember, is already an essential element in the combination. Thus the good, which escapes us when we try to grasp it in a single form, is apprehensible under the triple form of measure, beauty, and truth; and these three in one are what make the combination good. There is now no difficulty in answering the second part of our question. Pleasure is the most lying thing in the world, while reason, if not identical with truth, is of all things the most like it. Pleasure, again, is the most unmeasured, mind and knowledge the most measured, of things. And lastly, while no one ever saw

[1] *Philebus*, 59 D–64 B.

or conceived any ugliness in reason, the sight of some of the greatest pleasures is either ridiculous or disgusting [1].

We may now, therefore, proclaim to the world that pleasure is not the first of possessions, or the second either. First come measure and all things of the same eternal nature as measure; second, proportion, beauty, perfection, and the like; third, mind and understanding; fourth (to come to the goods of the soul itself), sciences, arts, right opinions; fifth, pure or painless pleasures; and there the list stops. It remains to sum up our judgment once more. Neither pleasure nor reason has the self-sufficingness and perfection which we require in the good; the good is something higher than either of them. But reason is infinitely more akin to it than pleasure. Pleasure is fifth in the list, and we will not put it first for all the horses and oxen in the world; it is to these that men go for their oracles when they judge pleasure to be the chief thing in life; 'they believe in the loves of the brutes instead of in the inspired words of the muse of philosophy.' [2]

Some attempt has been already made to interpret the general idea which underlies the argument of the *Philebus*; but the practical bearing of the dialogue still requires some notice. It proposes to answer the question, What is the true end of human life? and at the conclusion we are tempted to ask impatiently, What does the answer mean? Does it mean that we are to aim in our lives at mathematical precision, or at statuesque repose, or at logical consistency? And what is the connexion of these elaborate analyses of existence and consciousness with the somewhat obvious precept, to get as much knowledge as we can and to cultivate only the

[1] *Philebus*, 64 B–66 A. [2] *Ib.* 66 A–end.

higher pleasures? Part of our embarrassment, in the case of this as of some other dialogues of Plato, arises no doubt from the length and rapidity of his mental stride, and the comparatively unoccupied state of the ground which he had to traverse. It would take a modern philosopher much more time and trouble to pass from an analysis of heat or of itching to the conception of a divine mind or an absolute good. But the chief stumbling-block lies in the fusion (to some it will seem the confusion), already noticed in the *Gorgias*, of the scientific and moral aspects of life. We are accustomed to regard science as having to do with an objective world which goes its own way and has its own laws, unaffected by, and indifferent to, human good and evil. Morality on the other hand seems to us peculiarly a personal matter, a something which we make and unmake for ourselves, and in which, rightly or wrongly, we emphatically distinguish ourselves from what we call nature. There have not indeed been wanting modern attempts to bridge over this distinction, but they have mostly taken the direction, not of relating the moral and the natural through the medium of some third and higher element, but of making the first disappear in the second. Thus, when we find Plato, in an ethical dialogue, treating pleasure and pain under the same head, and on the same principles, as cold and heat, we are inclined to say: 'Let us distinguish; pleasure and pain may be dealt with as physical processes, but, so dealt with, they are not matter for the moralist; or again, cold and heat, as personal feelings, may acquire an ethical interest, but in that case they have passed out of the sphere of physical science. Ultimately, no doubt, we only know "phenomena," that is, our own feelings, and so far pleasure and

heat may be ranged together; but the standards which we apply to these feelings are quite disparate. Both standards are, if you will, conventional; scientific mankind fixes that of heat, moral mankind that of pleasure, each for certain purposes of its own; but there is no connexion between the two standards, nor any reason to suppose that they can be reduced to one. Rightness in physics is one thing, another thing in ethics.'

Perhaps we shall not be misinterpreting the *Philebus* if we elicit from it an answer somewhat as follows: 'The rightness both of natural processes and of human conduct, so far as there is a rightness in either, is due to the working of a single principle. You say that there is no objectively right feeling of heat; that heat is either what it is to this or that individual—that is, entirely indeterminate,—or else what it is to science, entirely conventional. But really there is no such thing as an entirely indeterminate feeling; the vaguest and most capricious feeling in the world must be measurable to some extent, or it would be nothing. What are called the arbitrary measures of science are only a purer and more exact form of the measure inherent in different degrees in all feeling and all existence. The minimum of feeling and existence is the minimum of measurableness. As feeling acquires more content, and existence becomes fuller, they become more determinate. New limits emerge in the limitless; gradations, elements, parts, kinds, are felt, where before there was monotony; and each new limit supplies a new standard of measurement. The increase of measure is not an arbitrary external addition, but the recognition of an inherent development. And it is in morality as in science. The moral standard is not a rule mechanically applied to circumstances; it is the

measure inherent in the circumstances, and giving them their character. The moral organization responds to the moral fact, as the physical to the physical fact; the finer the organization, the more delicate its measurement, and the fuller therefore its experience. Laws and institutions fix certain units of measurement; they are rough moral thermometers. The more feeling has been morally measured by an individual or a society, the higher their moral condition. Each new step in moral consciousness is consciousness of a new limit, not a new limit to experience, but a limit which is itself a new experience. Here, too, reality grows with the growth of measure.'

'But,' it will be said, 'if reality is measure, each different kind of reality has its own measure: the essences of motion and heat, temperance and pity, may exhibit themselves as various measures, but what is the common measure of them all? It may be possible to express them all in terms of some common factor, but the expression so obtained will only express what is common to all, not what is specific in each; heat will remain heat, and pity, pity.' But there is no reason to suppose that when Plato puts together, as he does in the *Philebus*, the various phenomena of temperature, rhythm, health, and virtue, as expressions of the principle of measure, he is thinking of a possible reduction of them all to forms of one element, such as motion. His conception of the ultimate measure, the measure which he places first of the three forms of the good, is made clear to us when we consider his conception of the second of these forms, 'symmetry' or proportion. Symmetry or commensurableness is indeed, as he himself indicates[1], only another aspect of

[1] *Philebus*, 26 A ἔμμετρον καὶ ἅμα σύμμετρον: and 64 D. In 65 A, συμμετρίᾳ occurs where we should expect μετριότητι, for in the final list,

measurableness. In becoming measurable itself, a thing becomes commensurable with all other things of the same kind. The difference is that, while in measure we think primarily of the thing itself, in symmetry we think of its relation to other things, and ultimately to a whole of which it is a part. It is in this whole that we must look for the law or principle or measure which determines that relation. Thus the same measure becomes differently symmetrical as it enters into different wholes. A second of time obeys different laws of proportion according as it is an element in an hour, in a musical phrase, or in an act of forbearance, respectively. In Plato's language, it gets more 'determined' at each step; it remains the same itself, but it acquires new significance, and is linked to larger issues. And, if we follow out this line of thought, we are led with Plato to the idea of a perfect whole, or 'cosmos,' in which each form of existence finds its measure assigned to it, and in fulfilling that measure fulfils itself. This brings us to the third aspect of the good in the *Philebus*, truth. If the truth of a thing is the thing realized, neither more nor less, it easily passes into measure on the one side (for its measure is its full self), and into symmetry on the other (for its true nature is determined by its position in a whole). In substituting, as he afterwards does[1], 'mind and intelligence' for 'truth,' Plato must be supposed to be speaking of what he has before[2] called the 'divine mind,' a mind which *is* all that it is conscious of, and is

66 A–B, *σύμμετρον*, not *μέτριον*, is identified with *καλόν*. The passage from the *Politicus* (283 C–285 A), referred to below, p. 343, bears directly upon this point.

[1] Cp. *Philebus*, 65 A and 66 B; also 65 D.

[2] *Ib.* 22 C, where it is implied that the divine mind is the good.

conscious of all that is, a mind in which the distinction of subject and object disappears. It is this mind to which he had ascribed a life of pure being [1], above the flow and ebb of human consciousness, and which he had identified with the causative force which creates a determinate universe out of indeterminate nothing. It is, in fact, the good, conceived, not as a principle or a condition, but as an activity.

Thus, starting from the idea that the minimum of being implies determinateness, and that in reaching its proper limit each thing attains both its being and its well-being, its truth and its good, we have been led, as a logical consequence, to the idea of an absolutely determined being or cosmos, by relation to which each particle of being is what it is, and in which is realized, by the sustaining energy of mind, the perfect measure, beauty, and truth of things. Plato has expressed the same idea in religious language, and with a directly moral bearing, in a passage in the *Laws* [2], which may be quoted as a complement to the abstractions of the *Philebus*. 'God, as the old saying is, holding in his hand the beginning and end and middle of all things, goes straight to his purpose by the long ways of nature, and justice ever follows him, to punish all shortcomings of the divine law. He who would fare well follows close behind her, in lowliness and moderation; but if any man is lifted up in his heart by riches or honour or beauty, and in the fire of youthful insolence and folly thinks that he needs no ruler or guide, but can himself be a guide to others, he is deserted by God; and so deserted he takes to himself others like him, and prances through the world spreading confusion as he goes; and to many

[1] *Philebus*, 33 B. [2] *Laws*, iv. 715 E–716 C.

he seems to be somebody, but in no long time he pays a righteous penalty to justice, and makes ruin of himself, his house, and his state. In the face of this order of things, how must the wise man bear himself? Surely he must make up his mind to follow after God. And how must he act so as to be the friend and follower of God? There is only one way of acting, and one principle, the old principle that the measured is the friend of the measured, but the unmeasured is the friend neither of the measured nor of the unmeasured. Now God, and not, as some say, man, is the real measure of all things, and he who would be the friend of God must be such as God is.'

It would seem, then, that the first three in the list of goods with which the *Philebus* concludes represent different aspects under which the divine perfection may be apprehended. The last two, (1) truth of science, art, and opinion, and (2) unmixed pleasures, are distinguished as 'of the soul itself,' and constitute in their combination the highest good realizable in human life. Man, Plato implies, can never transcend the conditions of time and process; only the divine being *is*, all else only comes to be or ceases to be. But the divine good is the cause or condition of the human; the latter is only good as it approximates to the former, as it rises out of becoming into being. In the measure, beauty, and truth, realizable by us in intellect and emotion, we catch something of the reality. The universe lies about us, composed of the same elements, endowed with the same life, ordered by the same reason, as ourselves. We have to learn to know it in order to take our part in it. From the crude counting of the unlettered man or child up to the purest abstractions of mathematics and physics, and on again

to the philosophical analysis of the very nature of being, the mind is gradually coming to find the measure, the proportion, the truth, of things. And in learning their limits it is also learning its own, learning to correct the phantasmagoria of its senses and to distinguish their confusion, to direct the currents of its prejudices and the momentum of its logical impulses, to feel the clear outlines of reality and to delight in responding to their pressure, to see things as they are, and to be itself at one with them. This is why truth, alike in its lowest and its highest forms, is to be welcomed as an unmixed good.

But man not only knows, he also feels; and, if he is to be truly himself, his emotions as well as his intellect must be true. And this brings us to the last point to be noticed in the *Philebus*, the distinction between true and false pleasures. The question in what sense we can speak of feelings being true or untrue must, as Plato himself was aware, always be a difficult one. We are inclined to say with Protarchus[1], there may be untrue opinion, but how can there be untrue pleasure? We feel what we feel, and what other canon of truth is there? To appreciate Plato's answer we must first appreciate his mode of representing the mental activities in general. In his view the various acts of thinking, reasoning, desiring, are not temporary exercises of faculty by a soul which still remains in the background with a separable life of its own; they *are* its very life and being, and as such they are the modes in which it takes its part in the life and being of the world. The truth which is apprehended in knowledge is thus the 'sustenance[2]' of the

[1] *Philebus*, 36 C, 38 A.

[2] *Rep.* vi. 490 B. Cp., in this connexion, *Rep.* vi. 500 C; *Phaedo*, 79 C–D; *Timaeus*, 42 E–44 D, 47 B–C; *Phaedrus*, 248 B.

soul, that upon which it lives, that which it assimilates, and in assimilating which it is itself assimilated. And analogously ignorance, forgetfulness, illusion, are not mere states passing over the surface of the soul; they mean that it is dropping out of the life of the world, dying of inanition, or growing diseased and maimed; it not only sees things as they are not, it is itself failing to be its true self.

Now pain and pleasure, as we have seen, are described by Plato as the feelings of the disintegration and restoration of harmony in the organism, of the fall and rise of the vital energies, of the emptying and refilling of capacity. They are not external additions to the life of the soul with a character of their own; they are part and parcel of the life itself, and get their character from it; they *are* the soul in certain phases of its being. The question is, What are these phases? What *is* the soul in pleasure and pain? Plato answers, In pleasure, strictly speaking, the soul does not attain being at all, but is only coming to be; for pleasure is just the sense of transition from a lower to a higher state of being. A perfect being, in which there was no want and no dissolution, would have no pleasure; its consciousness would be of some higher kind, but it would not be what we mean by pleasure [1]. All pleasure, then, is so far a form of unrealized, imperfect, being; and it cannot therefore be consistently conceived as the good of life, as that in which life finds its fullest expression. Only as determined and realized in various forms of thought, as conceived, remembered, anticipated, and the like, can it be a constituent in the end or true being of man.

[1] Cp. *Sympos.* 203 E, *Θεῶν οὐδεὶς φιλοσοφεῖ οὐδ' ἐπιθυμεῖ σοφὸς γενέσθαι, ἔστι γάρ.*

There are however various degrees of this imperfection in the being of pleasure. Man is a creature of change; this is his limitation; but, short of perfection, there is no limit to the degree of being which he may attain[1]. The question is, in what kinds of pleasure does he attain most being; in other words, what kinds of pleasure are the most real? Plato answers, pleasures are real in proportion as the satisfaction which the soul has, or the height to which it rises, in them, is permanent. Suppose a man, so far as it is possible, to live solely for the pleasure of eating. Eating sums up his life; his being is the consciousness of eating. How much being does he realize? From Plato's point of view, very little: he is perpetually coming to be, and ceasing to be, the same thing; he sinks and rises, wants and is satisfied, but he gets no further; each rise is the beginning of the old fall, each satisfaction passes into the old want. He never remains at his highest point; he is never a really satisfied being. He is emotionally what a man would be intellectually who was always learning and always forgetting the same thing; and so, when Plato in the *Gorgias*[2] compares the soul of the unwise to a 'sieve,' he explains it as the sieve not only of unassimilated knowledge but also of unsatisfied desire. 'Those who have no experience of wisdom and excellence,' as he says in the *Republic*[3], 'but live continually in feasting and the like, are always going down and halfway back again; and in this interval they spend their lives, wandering to and fro; but they never see or reach the true summit, nor do they ever fill themselves with real being, or taste of lasting and pure pleasure.'

[1] Cp. what is said, *Sympos.* 207 E–208 B, about immortality.
[2] 493 B–C. [3] ix. 586 A.

The last words recall the second way in which the *Philebus* characterizes the inferior pleasures; their 'untruth' goes along with their 'impurity.' They start from a sense of want, varying in degree from half-pleasant irritation to positive pain; in the very act of satisfaction they die away, and at each moment in it they are felt by contrast with the sense of want, and, as Plato expresses it, are 'coloured by it'[1]. Compare with them the aesthetic and intellectual pleasures. Here too there must be, to begin with, some unfulfilled capacity, but the sense of it is one of receptivity and expansiveness, not of a want to be got rid of. Nor does the pleasure cease with the satisfaction. It is not indeed permanent, for continuous being is impossible to man; in Aristotle's words, 'he gets tired'; but the satisfaction does not at once begin lapsing into dissatisfaction; it becomes a part of himself; he is more than he was, and permanently more; he does not have to go backwards again, but starts next time from a higher level. As Plato naïvely says[2], 'Things like true opinion and knowledge and intelligence have much more of pure being and immortality in them than things like meat and drink.' Truth, beauty, and goodness, as we may put it, are inexhaustible; they do not perish in the attainment; the soul that has the capacity can live on them and in them, without the pangs of want or the sadness of satiety.

The third characteristic of the truer and purer pleasures is their greater 'determinateness.' The 'indeterminateness of the inferior pleasures does not mean, as it might at first suggest, that the soul has a sense of infinite capacity in them; on the contrary, it indicates

[1] *Rep.* ix. 586 B. [2] *Ib.* ix. 585 B.

that the feeling, just in proportion to its intensity, is inarticulate and smothered. It is an indeterminate feeling in the same way that intense pain is[1]; in both our whole being is absorbed; sense, imagination, reason, are concentrated in a single point of consciousness; yet the absorption is not in fullness of existence but in a blank intensity. On the other hand, in listening to a beautiful tone or looking at a fine curve or appreciating a striking truth, still more in moving through the measured mazes of a symphony, a picture, a book, the soul puts itself out, diffuses itself into its limits, and is buoyed upon a resistant element. And as the man who is to be an artist must be able not merely to feel, but to express what he feels, not only to melt but also to mould his materials, so in all life the determining reason, which distinguishes and connects, which formulates and calculates and infers, must dominate and transfuse the indeterminate emotion, if the latter is not to be a mere seething mass, dangerous in proportion to its heat. To sum up the theory of the *Philebus* as regards the sensual pleasures in the simplest and at the same time the most Platonic way, we may say they are bad because there is so little in them. The most fatal consequence of indulging them, as Plato tells us elsewhere[2], is not that it causes loss of health or loss of money, but that 'it makes us believe that the objects of our appetites are the clearest and truest of things, when they are not.' The soul that lives for them seeks its own annihilation; its life leaks away in the sand, instead of rising from level to level of an all-embracing reality.

Republic. The identity of morality with order and measure,

[1] See *Philebus*, 27 E–28 A. [2] *Phaedo*, 83 B–D.

logically implied and polemically maintained in the *Gorgias* and *Philebus*, is exhibited in the calmer air and ampler outlines of the *Republic* as a constructive principle which explains and justifies the facts of political and personal life. The *Republic*, just because it is the greatest monument of Plato's genius, must suffer the most in any succinct account of his writings. Its name does little to indicate its scope and character: it is in reality a dramatized philosophy of human life. It shows us in a series of logically connected pictures the nature, nurture, and development of the soul; the life which it makes for itself in religion, art, morality, politics, science, philosophy; its rise to the height at which it is almost one with the divine, its fall to the depth at which it almost ceases to be human; what it is and what it is capable of being upon earth, what it may hope and what it may fear to be after death. At the expense of destroying the effect of the work by dismemberment, we must here disengage those parts of it which illustrate most directly Plato's conception of goodness and the good, putting aside those parts which would illustrate his view of knowledge, art, psychology, and politics.

The *Republic* starts with the question, What is justice? and, as the Greek word which we translate 'justice' practically covered the whole duty of a good citizen, this question easily passes into another, How is a man to live so as to live best? A series of representative solutions, none of which is found to be satisfactory, forms a sort of critical introduction to the main body of the work. The series begins with the old man Cephalus, who represents the generation which is passing away, and sums up the experience of a long and good life. Socrates has come to have a chat with him, for he

'delights in talking to old men'; they have gone before him on the road by which he may have to go, and he likes to hear whether they have found it rough or smooth. Whether old age proves agreeable or the reverse, depends, it seems to Cephalus, mostly upon a man's character; no doubt it is a consolation in old age to have plenty of money, but on the whole the chief good of money is that it makes it easier to be just, so that when a man comes to die he can feel that he has deceived no one, voluntarily or involuntarily, and has paid his debts to God and man[1]. Socrates is going on to ask him more particularly what he means by justice, when his son Polemarchus breaks in with a definition of it borrowed from Simonides, and Cephalus retires. According to Polemarchus, justice is 'to render to every one his due.' When questioned by Socrates, however, he finds that he is not master enough of his formula to save it from ludicrous misinterpretation[2], and falls back in his perplexity upon the familiar principle of the popular morality, 'do good to your friends, and harm to your enemies': this is what he really means by justice. But, as he has to admit to Socrates, to 'do harm' to a thing is to 'make it worse,' that is, to diminish its intrinsic virtue or goodness; and to do harm to a man, therefore, is to make him less good, and therefore less just (for justice is human goodness). To say, then, that it is the function of justice to do harm is like saying that it is the function of music to make a man unmusical, or of heat to produce cold[3].

[1] *Rep.* i. 327 A–331 B.

[2] This first section of the argument between Socrates and Polemarchus 331 C–334 B) has already been briefly characterized above, p. 267.

[3] *Rep.* i. 331 C–336 A.

This 'feeble nonsense,' as he considers it, rouses the indignation of the sophist and rhetorician Thrasymachus, in whom Plato has drawn (with what justice we cannot tell) a blustering bully, who discharges, with mock profundity, cynical effrontery, and coarse wit, the sounding theories of political selfishness which might sway an Athenian law-court or drown opposition in the popular assembly. Thrasymachus proclaims that justice is 'the interest of the stronger.' Justice, he explains to Socrates, is what is enacted by law, and law is made by the government; each government legislates in its own interest, a democracy in the democratic interest, an aristocracy in the aristocratic; and the government is the stronger. By 'government,' as he further explains, he understands government 'in the strict sense,' that is, the government so far as it really knows its business and does not make mistakes; in fact, the government which understands the art of governing. The question then arises, in what sense an art can be said to have an interest. The interest of a doctor, as such—it is urged by Socrates—is to cure disease; that of a steersman, as such, is to steer his ship: the fact that the one makes money and the other gets the benefit of a voyage must not be allowed to count if we are speaking strictly. The interest of an art, then, is no other than its own perfection; it attains its end in its exercise; it wants nothing more than this to make it perfect. It is the material on which the art works that is imperfect, and it is just to remedy this imperfection that the art exists. Thus any interest which the art has, other than its own perfection, is the interest of its material; medicine seeks to remedy the deficiencies of the body, and in so doing secures the interest of the body. To the art of

government the governed are the material; and the government, so far as it is really a government, will seek the interest, not of itself, but of the governed [1].

Thrasymachus pities the simplicity of Socrates in supposing that any governments worth the name regard any but their own interests; they look at the governed as the shepherd looks at his sheep. Justice, which is the interest of the stronger, is the interest of no one else; it is the bane of the weaker. The really best thing for every one is injustice, provided it be successful. When practised on a small scale it gets called bad names, theft, burglary, sacrilege; but in its most perfect form, that of a tyranny, it is greeted with universal applause [2]. Socrates observes that Thrasymachus has abandoned the strictness upon which he had insisted in definition: for the shepherd, so far as he is a shepherd, regards only the good of the sheep. Each art does a specific good, and the good which is done is independent of the pay which the artist receives for doing it. The pay is the subject of another art, the art of wages, which secures the interest of all wage-receiving arts. It is just because the artist derives no advantage from his art, as such, that he has to be otherwise remunerated [3]. It seems however to Socrates that, in asserting injustice to be altogether better than justice, Thrasymachus has raised a new and much more important issue, and one from which we must not shrink. By injustice Thrasymachus means self-aggrandisement, getting the most of everything for oneself: this he holds to be wiser, stronger, and happier than justice—to be, in fact, the true 'virtue' of life [4].

Firstly, then, as regards the wisdom of injustice. If

[1] *Rep.* i. 338 C–342 E.
[2] *Ib.* i. 343 A–344 C.
[3] *Ib.* i. 344 D–347 E.
[4] *Ib.* i. 347 E–349 A.

we observe other men who are 'wise' and 'good' in their crafts, we see that they do not try to get the better of other wise and good men, but only of the unwise and bad. The good doctor, in prescribing a diet, does not try to outdo another doctor, nor the good musician, in tuning an instrument, to outdo another musician; it is only men who are not doctors or not musicians whom they try to outdo; no one but the ignorant artist thinks of outdoing all other people, competent and incompetent alike. Now injustice makes a man wish to go beyond everybody, just and unjust alike; while justice makes him wish to go beyond the unjust, not the just. Justice, therefore, seems to resemble wisdom and goodness, injustice to resemble unwisdom and badness[1]. Next, as to strength: if any body of men, a state, an army, or a band of robbers, want to act together unjustly, they cannot do so unless they are just to one another; injustice produces disunion, justice union. And, if they have these effects in large bodies, they will have them also in small ones, and in individuals; and injustice will make a man incapable of action, and set him at enmity with himself and with all just beings, men and gods. When unjust men are said to act together effectively, the truth must be that they are only half demoralized; if they were utterly unjust, they could not act at all[2]. Lastly, as to happiness or well-being. The function of a thing is what that thing alone can do, or can do better than anything else can; and to everything which has a function there is a corresponding virtue, without which it cannot perform its function well. Life is one of the functions of the soul, and the soul cannot live well if it be deprived of its proper virtue, and such

[1] *Rep.* i. 349 B–350 C. [2] *Ib.* i. 350 D–352 D.

a virtue is justice: the unjust soul, therefore, lives ill, and to live ill is to be miserable[1].

Two points are specially noticeable in these early sections of the *Republic*. One is the insistence on the idea, continually implied or expressed, that, if morality is to be discussed at all, its terms must be understood to have some minimum of definite meaning, and this meaning must be adhered to. If justice is in any real sense 'good,' it cannot be the cause of evil; if it is in any real sense a 'virtue,' it cannot help bettering the state of its possessor; if it is a real 'art' or principle of government at all, it cannot be explained away as injustice looked at from the side of the stronger. The conclusions drawn from these and similar premisses are often stigmatized by a modern reader as 'verbal' or 'sophistical,' partly because exact thinking about partially familiar ideas is always irksome and irritating, but partly also because the ideas which Plato is trying to fix are often expressed in terms that have become insignificant or commonplace, and no longer arrest either our moral sympathies or our moral antipathies. The other point to be noticed is the recurrence, though in a cruder form than in the *Gorgias* or the *Philebus*, of the argument based upon the analogy between the art of conduct and other arts. The language in which the bad artist is described in the *Republic*, as the man who is ready to go beyond all other men, artists or not artists, is peculiarly liable to mislead, suggesting as it does at first that the bad artist is just the one who tries to reach perfection, while the good artist rests satisfied at a lower level. Reflexion shows that Plato has here embodied in a concrete form what he describes in the *Philebus* under the abstract name of 'the in-

[1] *Rep.* i. 352 D–354 A.

determinate,' that which is 'always a more or a less' and 'never a so much'[1]. The artist whom no other good artist tries to go beyond represents the standard of goodness or perfection in his art at the time being; and the distinction is between a man who recognizes the existence of such a standard, and knows when it has been reached, and a man who does neither the one nor the other.

Light is thrown upon Plato's phraseology here by a passage in the *Politicus*[2] where he is investigating the nature of 'excess' and 'defect' in general, and distinguishes between two kinds of measurement, that which measures the greater against the less, and that which measures them both against the nature and requirements of a given thing which has to be made or done. From the first point of view the greater is what is in excess of the less; from the second, it is that which is in excess of the proportionate, the fitting, the opportune, the right, whatever in fact occupies the place of a mean between extremes. It is measure in the second sense which is of the essence of all the arts; their existence stands and falls with that of the proportionate. It is clear that the 'outdoing' or 'going beyond' of the *Republic* has reference to measure in the second of these senses: it is not the doing of a 'more than less,' but of a 'more than the proportionate, that is, the right, amount.'

The position of Thrasymachus led to the following results. The one right thing is self-interest, that is, what is traditionally called injustice, the denial of all principle. If successful (that is, if it be the self-interest of the stronger), it is called justice; if not, it is punished as injustice. What is traditionally called justice, the

[1] Above, p. 313. [2] 283 C–285 A.

recognition of a principle applying to others as well as to oneself, is a mistake, though one may be driven to it by fear of worse consequences. This position has been shown to be logically untenable: on all analogy, the recognition of some such principle, in life as in other things, would seem to be the condition of excellence, strength, happiness. But, though logically Thrasymachus is silenced by Socrates, a feeling of dissatisfaction remains, of which the two brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, are now made the exponents. Young men of talent and promise, with high moral enthusiasm and minds open to all the speculative influences of the time, they are eager to hear the question discussed upon a deeper basis. The difficulties which they feel, concern the relation of the real and the apparent, the inward and the outward, the essential nature of morality and its external results or accompaniments. If justice is really good and the highest good, it must be good not merely like pleasure, which is good independently of its results; nor merely like medicine, which is good only for its results; but good in the fullest sense, like sight, knowledge, health, both for its own sake and for its results. Now this is just what has never been properly shown. Morality has been preached to us from time immemorial, but only because in various ways, in money, honour, reputation, it pays to be moral. What we want to be shown is, 'what are the effects for good and evil of justice and injustice themselves in the soul of man, whether they are seen or whether they are not': no one would be unjust if he knew that in being so he was 'harbouring his own greatest enemy.' Glaucon and Adeimantus accordingly propose to restate the case between justice and injustice, in the form of certain current theories, which, though

differing in motive, agree in emphasizing the external side of morality, and so practically destroying its essence. They do this, not because they believe in the theories (for they do not), but because they wish to get from Socrates a solution of their difficulties; and with this view they state them as forcibly as they possibly can [1].

The theory which Glaucon begins by expounding asserts, firstly, that justice is a conventional compromise; secondly, that those who practise it do so unwillingly from inability to do the opposite; thirdly, that their unwillingness is only natural, for injustice is really much better than justice. Firstly, then: in the nature of things it is good to do injustice, evil to suffer it; experience showed men that the evil of the latter exceeded the good of the former; and so, as they could not have the good without the evil, they made a compact with one another to give up both. This was the origin of law and contract, and the enactment of law was named justice, which is thus a mean between the best thing, doing injustice with impunity, and the worst, suffering it without power of retaliation. If a man had the power to be unjust, he would never dream of entering into the compact; it would be madness to do so. Again, if we would see that those who do justice do it under the constraint of law and against the impulses of nature, let us imagine two rings like that of Gyges in the fable, which enabled its wearer to make himself invisible at will, and let us give one to the just man and the other to the unjust. Who would be so 'adamantine' as to abide in his justice, when he could go about satisfying all his desires freely, like a god among men? The truth is that every one privately thinks injustice the best, and

[1] *Rep.* ii. 357 A–358 B.

rightly; a man who had such a power, and did not use it, would be thought a miserable fool by all who saw him, though they would praise him in public for fear of suffering injustice themselves. Lastly, let us put the two lives side by side in naked and unrelieved contrast. The unjust man must be supposed to be a perfect master of his craft; he must give the appearance of the greatest justice, and, if he ever makes a false step, he must be able to recover himself. Then set beside him the 'simple, genuine' man, one who 'wishes to be good, not to seem'; strip him of everything except his justice, and let him give the appearance of the greatest injustice. What sort of life may each expect? The one will be scourged, racked, imprisoned, blinded, impaled, and will be taught that the right thing is to seem just, not to be so. The other will reap the fruits of being, for he seems just, but he is unjust: he will have a place in the government, and marry whom he pleases, and make all the profits of unscrupulousness; he will win in the struggle of life, become rich, help his friends and harm his foes, make splendid offerings to the gods, and have a better chance than the just man of winning their favour. Such is one theory of the superiority of injustice to justice[1].

Adeimantus has heard an opposite view to this, which he thinks still more worth stating: it will make Glaucon's point clearer. It is the view which prefers justice to injustice, not however for its own sake, but for the worldly advantages which it secures. These advantages are extended to include the blessings of the gods; 'for the god-fearing man,' as Homer says, 'the earth bears wheat and barley, the trees are heavy with fruit, his flocks bring forth without fail, and the sea supplies him

[1] *Rep.* ii. 359 C–362 C.

with fish.' Even more splendid is the picture which Musaeus and Eumolpus draw of the banquet of the saints in Hades, where they lie on couches with crowns on their heads and drink to all eternity. Other poets prolong the wages of the righteous man to his children's children and the generations after them. But the unrighteous man in the other world they bury in mud, or make him carry water in a sieve, while in this world he suffers all the penalties which Glaucon assigned to the just[1].

Another view of justice and injustice is this. Many people are never tired of saying what a beautiful thing justice is; but, they add, it is difficult and laborious, while injustice is easy and pleasant, and is only conventionally disgraceful. And they are not afraid to honour bad men who are successful, and to treat the good and weak with contempt, though they confess that these are better men than the others. And what is most astonishing of all, they say that the gods often send misfortune to the good and prosperity to the wicked; and begging priests and soothsayers come to the rich man and persuade him that, if he or his ancestors have committed any crime, they have power from the gods to atone for it; or, if he wants to injure an enemy, they have spells by which they will do it for him at a trifling cost. They support themselves by quotations from the poets, and produce books of ritual by Orpheus and Musaeus, the children, as they say, of the Moon and the Muses. Their rites, which combine entertainment with worship, they call mysteries, and they persuade not individuals only, but whole cities, that these can absolve sinners from punishment both in this world and the next, while an awful fate awaits those who reject them. When a young man hears all this, a man who

[1] *Rep.* ii. 362 E–363 E.

has the ability to put together what he hears and to draw practical inferences from it, what is he likely to say to himself? Will he not conclude that the 'fortress' of life must be scaled by guile, not by justice; that 'seeming is stronger than truth, and master of happiness,' and that the arts of seeming are what he has to cultivate; that, as for the gods (if indeed there are any), we only know of them what we are told by the poets, who tell us that they can be bribed by sacrifice? Why not, then, do injustice, and sacrifice from the proceeds of it? If anybody talks of punishment in a future life, we are assured that there is great efficacy in the mysteries. On what conceivable grounds, then, should any one who has any advantages of mind or body, property or family, continue to prefer justice? Even if a man has convinced himself that all that we have been saying is untrue, and that justice is really the best, he will be very ready to excuse those who do wrong; for he knows that nothing but a divine instinct or exceptional knowledge makes a man abstain from injustice voluntarily. We have seen what are the consequences of praising not justice itself, but the appearance and results of it. Socrates has spent all his life in asking what the real nature of things is; surely he will tell us what is the power of justice for good, and of injustice for evil, in the soul, whether they be seen by gods and men or whether they be not[1].

The grim nakedness of the contrast drawn here between the two lives reminds us of the *Gorgias*. There the contrast was defiantly accepted by Socrates, and the bare principle of right upheld, in the confidence of invincible logic and in scorn of consequences, against the combined splendours and terrors of the world. The way in which

[1] *Rep.* ii. 363 E–367 E.

it is dealt with in the *Republic* is very different. Instead of exhibiting justice as an abstract principle, or investigating the soul in which he had been challenged to show its working, Socrates proceeds to analyze human society. But it is only in appearance that the ground is shifted. The state, as Socrates explains, is larger than the individual, and we shall find justice 'written in it in larger letters' and more easy to read[1]. And as we follow him in his delineation of an ideal society we see that he has only begun on the outside and is working inwards, tracing the external organization of the community back to its hidden source in human nature, and showing ultimately how the principles which regulate industry, war, and government are only the more superficial expression of those which regulate the moral life of man. Thus the question, How does justice work for good in the soul independently of visible results? is answered by showing that the whole visible structure of civic life depends upon invisible forces and principles, and that what is called justice, so far from being an arbitrary convention, is that condition of the soul itself without which society would dissolve.

Plato's method is first to sketch a society such as it would be if human nature were allowed and compelled to follow what he believed to be its 'natural,' that is, its highest, bent. The details of his conception of such a society, and of the human nature from which it springs, belong to other parts of his philosophy. It is enough here to notice that he finds the state to have three main functions, that of producing the material commodities of life, that of protecting itself against external aggression and internal faction, and that of government; these

[1] *Rep.* ii. 368 E–369 A; cp. viii. 545 B.

functions having their ground in the triple nature of the human soul, which makes their exercise both necessary and possible. Men are made by nature, and ought to be trained by education and law, to take a place in the industrial, military, or governing class. The perfect state would be that in which every born artisan was an artisan, every born soldier a soldier, every born ruler a ruler; and existing states are imperfect in proportion as this is not the case. We have now to see how Plato fits into this conception of society the current ideas of morality, and thus gives them a new meaning and foundation.

Every nation and age embodies its ideas of human excellence and the reverse in certain leading words. The Greek words which we translate 'justice,' 'wisdom,' 'courage,' and 'temperance,' had obtained such prevalence in Plato's time that it is usual now to call them the names of the Greek 'cardinal virtues,' and in the *Republic* they are assumed to be an exhaustive account of goodness. If, then, as Plato held, the goodness of a state is in principle the same as that of an individual, only exercised on a larger scale and on different occasions, these terms will apply to men in their public and political, as well as in their private and moral, characters. The state, of course, does not act except through its citizens; and, in speaking (as he habitually does) of 'the virtues of the state,' Plato is not thinking of qualities inhering in some abstract entity, but simply (as his illustrations show) of qualities exhibited by the citizens in various public capacities, as representatives of the community. What he is at pains to point out is that these qualities, though differently exhibited, are in essence the same, and depend upon the same psychological conditions, as those exhibited in the private life of individuals; so that, when we say

a state acts justly, wisely, bravely or temperately, we ought to mean that the minds of the men who represent the state in these several actions are in a condition, and swayed by principles, which would make them just, wise, brave, or temperate, in their own personal affairs.

[1] Beginning, then, with the community, as that in which virtue is exhibited in larger outlines, we have to ask, What is it which makes a state just? or, What is political justice? Justice, Plato answers, is the fundamental virtue which sustains society, which makes all other virtues possible, and which we only find it hard to see because it meets us at every step that we take[2]. Society exists for two reasons—because no individual can do everything for himself, and because every individual can do something for others. Society exists well in proportion as this double fact is recognized and acted upon; when each member of it fills the position which by nature and education he is best fitted to fill; when, in Plato's formula, 'every man does what belongs to him.' This is political justice. It is a principle which holds good in every stratum of society, from the lowest to the highest. In industry, under the form of proper division of labour, it secures the greatest quantity and the best quality of production; and in higher spheres it determines that the soldier, the administrator, the senator, shall be the right men in the right places. The more important the function, the more important becomes the principle. 'That a carpenter should try to be a shoemaker, or a shoemaker to be a carpenter, or the same man to be both, does no

[1] It is not possible in so limited a space to follow so long a work as the *Republic* in its actual method. I have therefore, while still using much of the language of the work, combined its results in the way which seemed best to secure brevity and clearness.

[2] *Rep.* iv. 432 D.

serious harm to a state. But that a man who is a mechanic or anything of that sort by nature, should be excited by wealth or numbers or strength to try to get into the military class, or a military man to get into the governing class when he is not capable of it, or that the same man should try to do all these things at once, this is ruin to a state[1].'

Plato's principle must not be understood as merely, or primarily, one of limitation. It does not say in the first instance, 'Do not try to do what you are not fitted for,' but, 'Do what you are fitted for, and in so doing you will do the best both for yourself and the community.' To put an agricultural labourer into fine clothes and tell him to work the land at his leisure is only to make him into something which is neither an agricultural labourer nor any other useful member of society[2]. And conversely, a man who ought to find his highest happiness in governing, but allows himself to find it in farming or commerce, will lose what was his own without really gaining what is another's, and will learn the truth of the old saying, 'the half is more than the whole.'[3] The pauper who cannot or will not work is admitted to be no true part of the community; but the member of the government who is spending his fortune in a way which will end by making him a pauper is really performing no truer function in the community, and has no more right to stay there[4]. Plato does not ignore the possibility of men born in a lower position being qualified for a higher, and *vice versa*; he expressly provides for such contingencies[5]; but it is characteristic of him to dwell

[1] *Rep.* iv. 434 A–B; cp. 421 A. [2] *Ib.* iv. 420 E–421 A.
[3] *Ib.* v. 466 B–C. [4] *Ib.* viii. 552 A–B.
[5] *Ib.* iii. 415 B–C.

more upon the principle which he would wish to see realized than upon the ways of working it, upon the ideal limit than upon the approaches to it. The just state, then, is that in which each man in his public character, as member of a class or institution, fulfils his capacity and acts up to his position. Justice is the diffused 'power' or 'virtue' in men which makes them able and willing to do this. It is also the principle upon which the social balance is restored when it has been upset, when one member of society has encroached upon the position of another: 'in the administration of the law the thing to be aimed at is that no one should either have what is another's, or be deprived of what is his own.'[1] Thus it is in a sense the cardinal of the cardinal virtues, for it expresses a general and essential condition, of which the other virtues admit of being represented as special aspects: 'it makes it possible for them to exist, and it maintains them in existence.'[2]

Next, what is political 'wisdom,' the wisdom of the state? Wisdom is obviously a kind of knowledge, but what kind? Good farmers or good wood-workers do not make a state wise; they make it good at wood-working and farming, and this is not to be wise as a state. The only knowledge which answers the requirement is knowledge of the state as a whole, which can regulate its relations with itself and with other states. Few men in any community are capable of such knowledge, but when we call a state wise we mean that those few men are in it[3].

What, again, is courage in a state? Clearly, when we call a particular state brave, we are thinking of its

[1] *Rep.* iv. 433 E. [2] *Ib.* iv. 433 B.
[3] *Ib.* iv. 428 B–429 A.

soldiers; they are the persons who 'have its character for courage or cowardice in their hands.' And what is it which makes a citizen serve his country bravely? Not the mere blind instinct of the brute or the slave, but the intelligent conviction, implanted by the state through education, as to what he ought to fear and what he ought not. The man whose soul is 'dyed' so fast with such a conviction that he can hold to it through all trials —trials of pain, pleasure, and appetite, as well as those of fear—is the brave citizen, and the state which is represented on the battle-field by such men is the brave state [1].

It remains to characterize political temperance, and we may take a hint from the common phrase 'self-control,' which is often substituted for 'temperance.' 'Self-control' in the literal sense is absurd, for how can a man be both stronger and weaker than himself? But what the phrase points to is the existence in the soul of two elements, a higher and a lower, of which the former ought naturally to control the latter. The lower element in a state is represented by the motley desires of the inferior classes, who are the numerical majority, while the higher is found in the simple and rationalized desires of the superior minority. Where the superior control the inferior, and where the control is felt to be right through all classes, there we have political temperance. Thus the temperance of a state is not exhibited in a particular part of the community, as was the case with wisdom and courage; rather it is a sort of harmony which pervades the whole social scale, producing unanimity as to who ought to rule; and the temperate state is that in which the various claims of intelligence, wealth, strength, and numbers, are felt by all to be duly recognized [2].

[1] *Rep.* iv. 429 A–430 C. [2] *Ib.* iv. 430 E–432 B.

The conception of the state which determines Plato's account of its goodness is that of a whole of parts, an organic unity; its virtues are simply the right modes of action of those parts, severally and in relation to each other. But the particular form in which he conceives the social organism depends upon his conception of the psychical organism. It is because the individual soul is a complex of elements, of which the functions are not interchangeable, and which exist in different proportions in different men, that society is necessary and possible. According as the individual is dominated by one or other of the primary impulses of human nature, the impulse to physical satisfaction, the impulse to self-assertion and personal distinction, and the impulse to communion with man, nature, and truth, he can supply to others something which they want, and take from them in return something which he wants himself. And, as the external organization of society is thus the result and expression of the internal organization of its members, so the virtues and vices of the state, as displayed by its citizens in the outer sphere of public life, result from and express the virtues and vices of their inner life. If the governing class governs in the true sense of the word, it is because the governing faculties of its members are neither being exercised upon alien objects nor having their functions usurped by alien faculties; and so on with the other classes. The principle of virtue, or, in Platonic phraseology, its 'form,' is the same in the state and in the individual; the various virtues are explained in both cases by being shown to be conditions of that harmonious specialization of functions without which successful vital activity, whether in public or private life, is impossible.

The just soul, accordingly, is that in which reason, the natural ruler, rules, and 'spirit' obeys and serves it, while both together combine to regulate the unquiet and insatiate appetites which form the largest part of every man, and to resist by counsel and action external aggressions upon personal independence. The brave soul is that in which spirit retains and carries out unflinchingly through all temptations the dictates of reason. To be wise is to understand the true interest of the whole self and its several parts; and temperance is the unanimity between the higher and lower natures as to which should rule and which obey[1]. Thus the principle of political ustice, that the man who is by nature a shoemaker should make shoes, and so on with the members of the other classes of the community, turns out to be only the visible 'image' of justice. What gives its value to the image is the fact that it expresses the inward condition of soul which is 'the truth of justice,' the condition in which there is no usurpation of functions by the various elements, but each does its own work, and the man feels himself at one with himself, 'tempered and tuned,' through the whole scale of his nature[2]. Virtue, then, may best be described as 'the health and beauty and good condition of the soul,' vice as its 'disease, ugliness, and weakness'; and, if all the meats and drinks and money and power in the world cannot make life worth living to a corrupt body, much less can it be worth living at the price of disorganizing and corrupting the very principle of vitality, the soul itself[3].

In the foregoing account of virtue, or the moral condition of life, the other half of the problem of Greek

[1] *Rep.* iv. 441 C–442 D. [2] *Ib.* iv. 443 B–E.
[3] *Ib.* iv. 444 D–445 D.

ethics, the moral end, is already practically determined. If goodness means the highest state of the soul's being, the end of life must be to be good; nothing else can really profit a man, for anything else means the surrender of something which he might have been. But it still remains to ask, In what concrete forms is the good apprehended? How is a man to present it to himself as a thing to be done or attained? In what relation does it stand to the 'good things' of life as ordinarily understood? The general character of Plato's answer to these questions follows naturally from his conception of virtue. If man can only exist normally as a member of a community, and if his virtue consists in recognizing and acting up to his position as such a member, his aim in life must be relative to the aim of the community. And we find accordingly that Plato makes the proof of virtue and the qualification for high position depend upon the degree in which a man is able to identify his own with the public weal. The 'dogma' or conviction which he is to learn to oppose to the illusions of pleasure and fear, to the violence of pain, to the persuasiveness of argument, is the simple one, that what is best for the state is best for him [1]. And, when it is urged against Socrates that in asking the best men in the community to give themselves up, body and soul, to its service, and to renounce the luxuries and privileges of property, and most of what is commonly esteemed necessary to the enjoyment of life, he is asking them to be miserable, he replies that he should not be surprised if these very men turned out to be the happiest of all, but that the first question is, how the whole state is to be made happy. To begin by trying to make a part happy is as illogical as it

[1] *Rep.* iii. 412 C–414 A.

would be to paint the eyes of a portrait purple, because purple is the most beautiful of colours, and the eye the most beautiful part of the face. The first thing to keep in view is the welfare of the whole community: let every one in it do his own work as well as he can, and trust to nature to determine what share of the general happiness shall fall to his lot [1]. The point of this passage is not to deny the right of classes and individuals to happiness, nor to assert the existence of some abstract happiness of the whole which is not that of the parts. The point is that happiness is not a determinate thing, so much money, so much enjoyment, which we can attach at pleasure to this person or that. Happiness is in what a man is and does, and this must be determined by his position, as the beauty of a colour is determined by its relation to other colours. When Plato returns to the objection which he here only half answers, he boldly declares that the men who are able to devote themselves to the highest service of the state, so far from sacrificing themselves thereby, attain a happiness higher than that of the Olympic victors; 'their victory is more glorious, and their nurture at the public cost more complete; the salvation of the whole state is the victory which they win, and the supply of all that is necessary to nurture and life is the crown with which they are crowned.' [2]

It is doubtless an inconsistency in Plato (due to the conflict of reforming zeal with a philosophical idea) that, while asserting in the strongest way the priority of the soul in the determination of human well-being, and the entirely secondary and instrumental character of material circumstances, he still attributes to the latter an originative efficacy for evil, and thinks to make

[1] *Rep.* iv. 419–421 C. [2] *Ib.* v. 465 D–466 C.

spiritual energy more spiritual by denuding it of conditions like property and the family, which it, and it alone, makes either good or bad. But if we look, not at the machinery by which he proposes to carry out his ideas, but at the ideas themselves, they lead to the following conclusions. A man must keep constantly before himself the fact that his own life is an element in a larger life, from which he can only escape by a sort of moral suicide. The more intensely he can realize this fact, the more he can draw all that he is and does into the circle of this idea, the more he can identify his own aims with those in which he participates, the higher is the life which he leads, and the fuller the being which he attains. Every one capable of belonging to a community can feel to some extent the ties by which he is connected with others; a perfect community would be one in which every one felt them in their full extent and significance. 'That state is in the highest condition in which the greatest number of people apply the words "mine" and "not mine" to the same things in the same sense; that state, in fact, which most nearly resembles a single man. For instance, when one's finger receives a blow, the whole community which reaches through the body up to the soul, forming a single order under the ruling principle in it, feels pain simultaneously with the pain of the part, and so we say, "the man has a pain in his finger." . . . The more a state is of this character, the more will it call the experiences of each individual citizen its own, and will rejoice and sorrow with him.'[1] In such a community the good of the whole would be felt by every member to be identical with his own good; and, though no human society is conceivable in which

[1] *Rep.* v. 462 C–E.

this would be absolutely the case, and in which there would not be aims of varying elevation and scope, Plato conceived that one society is better than another just in proportion as each individual, however limited his position, rises above his limitations to the consciousness of contributing to, and sharing in, a common and unlimited good.

And this brings us to the culminating point of the *Republic*. We have already seen that it is a fundamental principle with Plato that the lower nature secures its own truest interests by trying to follow the higher, not by trying to take its place; in other words, that the good of all the parts, and therefore the ideal of human life, can only be realized through the rule of the highest. 'When the whole soul follows the philosophic element and there is no faction in it, the result is that each part not only does its own work and is just, but also reaps its own pleasures in the best and truest form which they admit of; but, when any other element rules, the result to that element is that it loses its own pleasures, besides compelling the other elements to pursue a pleasure alien and untrue.'[1] This is the psychological expression of the idea which is better known in the form of the famous paradox that 'evil will not cease in the world, nor the ideal of society be realized, until philosophers are kings or kings philosophers.'[2] The idea, like most others in the *Republic*, has a double aspect. It may be regarded either as a practical suggestion for reforming human life by a sort of *tour de force*, or as a theoretical principle, never literally realizable, but containing an inexhaustible truth and capable of infinite application. In

[1] *Rep.* ix. 586 E–587 A. [2] *Ib.* v. 473 D–E.

the former aspect it belongs more to the Platonic politics; it is in the latter that we have to consider it here.

What then does Plato mean by demanding the sovereignty of philosophy as the condition of human perfection? We have seen already, and shall see again, that he conceives of 'being' in its ultimate nature as an order or system, of which 'the good' is the pervading and sustaining principle. What is true of being as a whole is true of that part of it which is human society. Human nature is such that the individual can only attain well-being by participating in a common life, that is, by recognizing and utilizing his individual limitations. The more a man can realize this fact, the higher and the truer is his life. To realize it completely would be to comprehend fully his position in the world, his relations to man, nature, and the universe; and this again would be to see the supreme Good, or principle, upon which those relations depend; to see, in fact, into the ultimate reason of things. Now the element in man in virtue of which he is capable of common life is what Plato calls 'the philosophic.' The kinds and degrees of communion into which it enables him to enter are very various, and will seem at first to have little connexion. It is this element which counterbalances the centrifugal element of self-assertion and aggression, giving rise to different forms of sympathy, from the merest attraction to what is familiar, up to the fellow-feeling of family, country, and humanity. It is this, again, which makes man susceptible to the influences of literature and art, drawing his soul out of itself to meet its better self in the uttered thoughts of other souls. It is this, lastly, which issues in the desire for truth and gives birth to knowledge; for here too, as Plato conceives, the operative impulse is to be at one

with something other than, and yet akin to, ourselves, to feel ourselves in our surroundings, to live with the life of the world. Supposing, then, that the 'philosophic' element in all its forms were allowed full sway, that the capacity for communion were fully tended and developed, that every man up to his measure realized his place in the whole of which he is a part, human life would reach its highest point, and those who had most of the 'philosophic' nature, that is, who realized the truth most profoundly, would be the utmost which it is given to man to be.

Thus it is that the requirement of the sovereignty of philosophy, and the requirement of the knowledge of the Good, go hand in hand in the *Republic*. 'Philosophy' to Plato means love of truth ; and its sovereignty would mean that the discovery of truth was recognized as the highest object of mankind, and obedience to it as their highest duty. To discover the truth of things is to discover their reason, that is, to see them in their true order and relations. And that which determines their order and relations is always some form of 'good.' Thus the sovereignty of 'philosophy' and the knowledge of the ultimate 'good' are only different aspects of the ideal of human life, conceived as perfect conformity to its true laws. This double requirement is enforced by Plato from two points of view, as giving satisfaction to a certain impulse in human nature, and as giving logical completion to the theory of human life. On the one hand, there is in man an irrepressible desire to get at the truth of things, through the appearance to the reality, through the fact to the principle ; and this desire, while it is the divinest thing in him and may be the most potent for good, is also the most dangerous

and may be the most potent for harm. The highest function of education is to train it aright, to concentrate its restlessness, to discipline its versatility, to supply it with an object adequate to it. Such an object is the ultimate Good or reason of the world, in the growing realization of which the utmost powers of the soul find their exercise, and its deepest longings their satisfaction[1]. On the other hand, the dictates of law and morality, if pressed for their final justification, lead to the conception of the same ultimate Good. It is this conception which fills up the broken outlines of the moral life, sheds the light of a fuller day upon the twilight of ordinary duties, and lifts a man for moments out of the limitations of time and country into a world of eternal law, of which in spirit he may already be a citizen[2]. The central section of the *Republic* is thus almost equally occupied with an account of the 'philosophic nature,' and a description of the steps by which the soul may rise to an understanding of 'the Good.' In his theory of knowledge Plato conceives philosophy as the ideal science; we have here to consider his conception of it as the ideal life.

To resume our analysis: the popular associations of the word 'philosophy' in Plato's time were not more favourable than they are in our own. The proposal that philosophers shall be kings will, he is well aware, be 'drowned in a wave of laughter and dishonour'; 'all kinds of distinguished persons will throw off their coats, seize the first weapon that comes to hand, and rush to do frightful execution' upon the man who has dared to utter such words. The only way to meet the onslaught

[1] Cp. *Rep.* vi. 490 B, 495 B, 497 D, 503 B–504 D; vii. 532.

[2] Cp. *Rep.* vi. 504 B–505 A; vii. 520 B–E; vi. 500 B–C, 501 B; ix. 592 A–B.

is to explain what a 'philosopher' really means. 'Philosopher' means 'lover of wisdom,' and, when a person is really fond of, really loves, a thing, he loves all of it. A man therefore cannot be a philosopher unless he has, to begin with, an indiscriminate appetite for knowledge wherever it is to be found. In this respect he is like a person in love; there is no feature in the face of truth which he cannot, on some pretext or other, find beautiful. This characteristic, however, though essential to the philosophic nature, is shared by it with other natures, and does not of itself make a man a philosopher. To be that, he must desire, not merely to know things in general, but to know the truth of things; he must be always trying to get through appearances to the reality, through the many to the one, through what changes to what is permanent[1]. It is just this which makes him objectionable to ordinary people. Things which they treat as fixed and palpable certainties, he is always showing to be only relatively true, while in his search for what he calls a higher reality he seems only to lose his eye for facts, or to upset accepted beliefs[2]. And indeed it is a similar speculative impulse which leads both to philosophy and to scepticism. Both begin with asking the 'reason why' about received beliefs; the difference is that the latter stops short when it has shown that what was believed to be absolutely true is only conditionally true, while the former goes on to ask, What are the conditions of its conditional truth? The genuine philosopher speculates, not in order to overthrow or confuse, not in order to frame neat-looking theories, but because he cannot help it. He cannot rest

[1] *Rep.* v. 473 E–480 A.

[2] *Ib.* v. 476 C–E, 479 A–B; vii. 516 E–517 E.

in the limits of ordinary opinion and appearance; he longs like a lover to get at reality, to embrace it, to be one with it[1]. And this passion for truth, when unalloyed by indolence or vanity, besides implying the intellectual gifts of quickness, retentiveness, and versatility, brings in its train all the qualities which make a noble character. It is incompatible with sensuality and avarice, for it diverts all the forces of desire into another channel. It banishes little-mindedness and cowardice, for it carries a man out of himself into contact with mankind and God, and gives him a vision of all time and all being, in which human life looks but a little thing. It makes him just and easy to deal with, for it is not touched by motives of desire or greed, vanity or fear[2]. 'He whose mind is truly set upon reality has no time to look down at the concerns of men, and fight, and fill himself with jealousy and rancour: his eyes are turned to a world that is set fast and ever the same, a world where nothing does or suffers wrong, but all is reasonable and in order; and, looking on this, he imitates and becomes like it.'[3]

If all this is true, if philosophy is more than the impulse and power to get at the real principles of things, if it carries with it all the great moral qualities as well, the philosophic life, harmonizing word and deed, theory and practice, must be the embodiment of human perfection, and those who live it are marked out to be the natural leaders of mankind. But is all this true? 'Is not the fact rather that, of those who study philosophy further than as a branch of education, the greater number are very eccentric, not to say utterly disreputable, while for the best all that it does is to make them useless

[1] Cp. *Rep.* vii. 537 D–539 D; vi. 498 D–499 A; 490 A–B.
[2] *Ib.* vi. 485 A–487 A.
[3] *Ib.* vi. 500 B–C.

members of society?' This is the truth; it cannot be denied; but what are the reasons of it? Philosophers, the few good ones who exist, are useless: but why? Only because the world will not use them. The ship of the state is sailed by ignorant and dissolute sailors, who not only have never learnt navigation, but who deny that it can be learnt. The owner and master of the ship is big and strong and well-meaning, but his eyes and ears and brain are not of the best, and he is easily drugged into indifference; while the one man who really knows how to steer is set aside as a star-gazing theorist. This is why the philosopher is useless. We cannot expect him to go and ask men to let him rule them: they must come to him, not he to them [1].

The prejudice against philosophy, however, is due much less to the uselessness of the few who pursue it worthily than to the demoralization of most of its professed votaries. And here again it is not philosophy, but society, that is really to blame. We have seen what the philosophic nature is, the most gifted, the most powerful, the most aspiring, of all natures. Now it is a law of living beings, whether plants or animals, that the stronger they are the more they need the right nourishment, and the more they suffer from the wrong. Weak natures do nothing great, either good or evil; it is genius spoilt which makes the great criminals of the world. What then is the nourishment which awaits the philosophic soul in the present state of things? Society talks a great deal about 'sophists,' who demoralize our youth; but the fact is that society itself is the greatest sophist, and fashions young and old, men and women, according to its will. It is the voice of society, in the

[1] *Rep.* vi. 487 C–489 C.

assembly, the law-courts, the theatres, the army, loud, exaggerated, and irresistible, and backed by the penalties of law and public opinion, which is our real educator. No individual teacher can possibly compete with it: the grace of God alone can save a soul against such odds. As for these poor paid amateurs, whom society stigmatizes as 'sophists' and regards as its rivals, they do nothing but retail what they have been taught. Society is a great beast of which they are the keepers; they study its tempers and appetites, how to come near it and where to touch it, what irritates and what soothes it, how it speaks and likes to be spoken to; and when they have learnt all this by long experience they put it together into an art, and call it wisdom, and teach it. They know nothing about what is right or wrong, good or bad, in it; what the beast likes is 'good,' what it dislikes is 'bad'; that is all the account they can give of them. And what does society like and dislike? It likes what it calls facts, and it dislikes principles; it believes in what is necessary, and disbelieves in anything ideal; it is not philosophical itself, and it is intolerant of those who are; and, as it is, so must those be who wish to please it. What fate, then, is likely to await the philosophical genius who is born in such surroundings? His very gifts are his ruin, especially if they be combined with the external advantages of birth, beauty, wealth, and position. Always first in everything, always surrounded by flatterers who want to use him for their own interests, he will be filled with gigantic hopes, and think that he can rule the world. And if some friend tells him gently that he is a fool, and that to get wisdom he must become her slave, is he likely to listen? Or if he does listen, and feels drawn by his better nature to philosophy, what

will not his flatterers do to keep him in their power and to stop the mouth of his adviser? So it is that the noblest natures, rare in any case, are lost to philosophy, and lost in a sense through their own gifts and advantages[1].

But this is not all. Philosophy is deserted by those who ought to be her true followers, but even in her humiliation the splendour of her name and place remains, and is too good to lose. Little men of little arts, their mechanic souls stunted and crippled and awry, seeing this goodly land unoccupied, come running out of their prisons, and jump into the sacred precincts. To what shall we compare them? To a little bald-headed tinker lately let out of gaol, who has had a bath and got a new coat, and is going to marry his master's daughter, so poor is she and forlorn. And what sort of children are they likely to produce? What but the bastard sophisms which circulate under the name of philosophy, and fasten shame upon their mother?[2] For these reasons it is that but a poor remnant is left of the true followers of philosophy. And these few, having tasted of her blessedness, and seen the madness of the world, finding public life corrupt to the core, and no one to help in the cause of justice, like men fallen among wild beasts, unwilling to join the evil-doers, and unable to do any good by resisting them, can only stand aside out of the driving storm, content, if they may, to live their life purely, and, when death comes, to die in hope[3]. We cannot, indeed, say that such men achieve nothing; but they would achieve much more, for themselves as well as for mankind, if they could find a proper state to live in. As it is, the

[1] *Rep.* vi. 489 D–495 B. [2] *Ib.* vi. 495 B–496 A.
[3] *Ib.* vi. 496 A–E.

philosophic nature is like a seed sown in an alien soil, under the influence of which it degenerates. If it had a society as good as itself in which to grow, it would show the world that it is the really divine nature, and that all else is human in comparison[1].

The question then is, How is this force, so potent for good or for evil, to be dealt with? How is it to be made an agent of salvation instead of destruction? We found before that a man's virtue is summed up in love of the community of which he is a member, and in the power to recognize his position and act up to it: what then must be added to this virtue if it is to employ and absorb all the eager promptings and all the high aspirations which we have seen to be characteristic of the greatest minds—if it is to be, in a word, the virtue of a philosopher[2]? There can be only one answer to these questions. It is 'the Good' which a man must learn and know, if he is to have a really complete theory of life. It is this which gives to everything else its value; for what are all the possessions and all the knowledge in the world, if they are not good? It is this which every one really aims at and is dimly feeling after, this which every one demands to have and for which he will take no substitute. And yet it is just this about which every one is most in the dark. Some people say knowledge is the Good, others pleasure; but the former, when pressed as to what knowledge they mean, have to say 'knowledge of the good,' thus implying the very thing which they profess to explain; while the latter are obliged to admit the existence of bad pleasures, and thus to identify good and evil. And this want of clearness and consistency in their ultimate aims reacts upon their subordinate aims,

[1] *Rep.* vi. 497 A–C. [2] *Ib.* vi. 497 D, 502 D–504 A.

and makes them lose what they would otherwise gain there. A man cannot have a very firm hold upon justice and honour if he does not know what makes them good. Until he knows that, his knowledge of them is dim, sketchy, incomplete. He is like a blind man walking straight along a road. He has no pattern, no ideal truth, in his soul, to which to look and refer all that he does: his grasp of morality is that of opinion, not of knowledge, and he goes through life like a man in a dream [1].

What, then, is the Good? To realize what it is in itself would be a 'flight above us' at present, but we may help ourselves by looking at the visible universe which the Good creates, and in which we may see its image and analogue. As the sun in the visible world, so is the Good in the spiritual. The sun is the source of light, without which the eye cannot see nor objects be seen: the Good is the source of reason, the presence of which makes the soul intelligent and objects intelligible. Where the light of truth and being shines, there the soul sees and understands; where the twilight of change prevails, its vision is clouded and inconstant. Thus we may speak of knowledge and truth as like the Good, but we must not identify them with it; it is their condition, and higher than they. Nor is it the condition of knowledge only, but of being also; it not only makes things intelligible, it makes them what they are; it is not being, but higher than being [2]. True education is the method of turning the eye of the soul gradually from the darkness in which it was born, to this creative sun with which it has an inherent affinity. At each fresh step in knowledge a new light is shed upon the world; the last and crown-

[1] *Rep.* vi. 504 A–506 C. Cp. vi. 484 C–D; vii. 540 A, 534 C.
[2] *Ib.* vi. 506 B–509 B.

ing step is taken when the soul becomes able to look upon the Good itself, not only as it is reflected in the order of nature and the forms of human life, but in its own place and essence, and to see that whatever is right and beautiful in the whole world, visible and invisible, is in some sense due to it. That those who have once had a glimpse of it should not care to return to the darkness of everyday life is but natural; they desire to dwell in the fruition of the heavenly vision. And when they are forced to come down to earth, and to discuss the dim and shadowy conceptions of right and wrong held by men who have never seen the reality, it is not strange if at first, while their eyes are yet unaccustomed to the dark, they cut a sorry figure. But only fools will laugh at them; the wise man must pity them. It is the duty of society to give them education, and make them feel that they owe it their services as the price of their nurture; then they may fairly be called upon to come down from their paradise, and take their part in the business of life. When they get accustomed to the darkness, they will see the things in it a thousand times better than do the people who have never been out of it; for, having known the realities, they will understand their reflexions and shadows [1].

Philosophy, then, is the ascent of the soul from the day of darkness to the true day, from Hades to the gods in heaven [2]. It is the liberation of the soul, gifted with the indestructible spark of divine intelligence, from 'the leaden weights which the pleasures of gluttony and the like attach to it.' [3] It is the impulse which, if it had full sway, would carry the soul out of the sea which encrusts

[1] *Rep.* vii. 517 A–520 C. [2] *Ib.* vii. 521 C.
[3] *Ib.* vii. 518 E–519 B.

it with the 'shells and stones and tangle' of earthly appetites, into communion with 'the divine, immortal, and eternal' to which it is akin[1]. It is the awakening from the dream-life in which men fight about shadows of power and grasp at phantoms of good, to the reality which lies around them if they would only open their eyes to see[2]. And, if the philosophic nature is justly called the divinest thing in us, it is also in a sense the most truly human. To the outward view man is one, but inwardly he is a complex creature, in which the many-headed monster of appetite and the lion of spirit far exceed in bulk the human element of reason. Yet it is this last, the impulse to seek and be at one with truth, which makes him what he is, and in living for this he lives for his true self. 'Whatever is best for a thing, that is most its own'; the lower nature does not lose by submitting to the higher; on the contrary, it is only by following the lead of the highest, by living, as far as they are able, the life of the whole and making its good their good, that the inferior impulses and desires find their most real satisfaction. The rule of any but the true ruler disorganizes the whole, and in so doing unmakes and falsifies both it and its parts. All vice, then, is a crime against what is nearest and dearest to us, against that human nature within us which is also the divine. To say that injustice is profitable is to say that it is profitable to let loose the animal elements to fight and tear and devour one another, instead of enlisting their nobler instincts, taming their serviceable appetites, and crushing out their bestiality. Is it 'profitable' to sell one's own son or daughter into slavery to savages; and shall we have no pity on the most godlike thing within

[1] *Rep.* x. 611 C–612 A. [2] *Ib.* vii. 520 C, 534 C; v. 476 C–D.

us, but enslave it to the most godless for the price of unrighteous gold? What is licentiousness but a hydra let loose in the soul, or what are self-will and effeminacy but the sinews of spirit too tightly or too loosely strung? What is the meanness which fawns for money but the lion cowed into a monkey, and why does trade vulgarize but because it teaches the sovereign reason to be the toady of avarice? To be ruled by divine wisdom is the best thing that can happen to a man, best of all if he have it in himself, next best if it be set over him from without. It is thus, under the guidance of one and the same principle, that we may all be made friends. The law of the state is the recognition of such a principle, and the end of education is to enable men to be a law to themselves. The wise man, then, will make it the aim of his life to tend the divine nature within him, and to let it rule in the commonwealth of his soul. He will honour all knowledge which helps to this end, and he will manage his body with the same view, making not pleasure only but even health subordinate to it. In the acquisition of wealth he will observe the same principle, trying not to get so much or so little as will disturb the balance of his soul. And so with honours, he will accept some and decline others, according as they will or will not make him a better man. As to politics, in the ideal state, of which he is really a citizen, he will take part in them, but not perhaps in the actual state in which he lives, unless by some divine favour of fortune. Whether the ideal is realized on earth, or not, makes no difference; it is laid up in heaven as a pattern for him to look at and to dwell in, and the life which he lives will be the life of it and no other[1].

[1] *Rep.* ix. 586 A–592 B.

Plato has supplemented and illustrated his conception of human good and perfection in the *Republic* by an account of human imperfection and evil. The results thus far arrived at may be recapitulated as follows. The perfect life would be the life of complete community, the life in which a man fully realized the truth that he is what he is by participation in a larger being. The element in man in virtue of which he can approach the realization of this truth is the philosophic element, and the perfect life would therefore be the life which is ruled by philosophy. And as the ground of this truth is the further and ultimate truth that the universe is an ordered whole, created and sustained by the absolute Good, the perfect life would be the life lived in the ever-present vision of the Good. But man is by no means wholly 'philosophical,' and the actual life of man is therefore by no means perfect. Even those few who deserve the name of 'philosophers' only deserve it because the philosophic nature in them is dominant; but the spirited and appetitive elements over which it dominates are still present in them, and form quantitatively the largest part of them. In most men some other element is dominant: their power of living in communion and realizing the good is perhaps only enough to enable them to serve a cause which they believe, without fully understanding it, to represent their better self; perhaps it does not enable them to do so much as this, but only to obey a power which they feel has a right to rule. Hence the need of society. The utmost that can be expected of a society is that there should be a felt reciprocity of interests between all its members. The forms in which this reciprocity comes home to different natures will be very different. To

some it will appear in the results of industry which has been both patriotic and successful; to others in personal distinction won in the service of the government; to others in the simple consciousness of living for the true good of the whole community. And these three forms represent roughly the great divisions into which mankind seemed to Plato naturally to fall, those to whom wealth, those to whom honour, and those to whom truth, embody respectively the chief good or end of life. A society or an individual is perfect in proportion as the lower ends are pursued in subordination to the higher; imperfect, in proportion as they are substituted for the higher. As virtue does not mean the elimination of the inferior nature, but its elevation, so vice does not mean the elimination of the higher nature, but its debasement.

From Plato's point of view this debasement may be indifferently represented as disorganization and loss of the sense of community, or as the substitution of a partial and therefore false end for an adequate and true one. In the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic* he has illustrated its double character in a series of pictures, each exhibiting a typical form of decline from the ideal life. The order of the series is logical, not historical: it represents the progress of the evil principle in human nature, not as it has taken place in any particular time or country, but as it might be supposed to take place if there were no counteracting influences. In delineating it Plato has ransacked the whole field of political history and social life over which his experience or his information extended, gathering from every quarter whatever seemed to him characteristic of the particular form of evil which he was describing, and combining it so as to illustrate that form most effectively. He has placed the

pictures of individuals and states, of personal and political life, side by side, in accordance with the theory which underlies the whole *Republic*, the theory that political and social phenomena must be interpreted as the expression of psychological and moral forces. What he calls the 'oligarchic' or the 'democratic' man is not merely a fanciful miniature of the state of the same name; he is the man who embodies those principles and tendencies which, if developed in sufficient strength, produce oligarchic or democratic constitutions or movements. Nowhere else has Plato shown so much knowledge of human nature, combined with so much pictorial power, as in this section of the *Republic*. It is only possible here, omitting most of the details which give colour to his pictures, and reserving the more special political aspects for later consideration[1], to notice how the leading features of the description illustrate his conception of moral imperfection and evil.

Next in worth to the philosophic impulse Plato sets the impulse to personal distinction—the impulse to which honour, the recognition of distinction by others, is the dominant object of desire. The first step in decline from the ideal life, therefore, is the substitution of honour for truth as the end of life. Honour depends for its worth upon the worth of those who bestow it; and we have seen that Plato finds the highest life of 'spirit' or the honour-loving element, not in mere successful achievement, but in achievement in the service of a cause or principle which it feels to be higher than itself. This 'service' is just what it loses when it becomes itself the ruling principle of life, and the want of such a higher guide and stimulus narrows its aspirations and coarsens

[1] [In another chapter of the unfinished book.]

its temper. The typical character which results from its dominion is that of the 'timocratic[1]' man. He is 'self-willed, and something of a Philistine, yet fond of art and literature, though no speaker; rough to slaves (whom he is not educated enough to despise), but courteous to equals; full of respect for authority, and fond of exercising it himself; ambitious of nothing but military distinction, and much given to athletics and hunting. When he is young he despises money; but the older he gets, the more he cares about it: there is a touch of alloy in his character, for he has neglected the education of reason and beauty, and nothing else can guard a man's virtue through life.'[2] The timocratic character issues in a generalized form in the constitution which Plato calls 'timocracy,' of which he regards Sparta as a type, with its depreciation of culture, suspicion of intellect, contempt for trade and agriculture, sharp division of governing and governed, passion for military glory, and repressed avarice[3].

It is this repressed avarice which breaks out in the next stage, when the reign of spirit is succeeded by that of appetite, and the motive of honour by that of wealth. Wealth, as being the great instrument of enjoyment, is often represented by Plato as the typical object of appetite in general, but in describing the progress of evil he is careful to distinguish between the 'necessary,' or 'productive,' and the 'unnecessary,' 'spendthrift,' or 'drone-like' appetites. The former are those which are indispensable to life and beneficial, the latter those which can be got rid of by effort and contribute nothing to the good of the organism. It is of the former that wealth is

[1] 'Timocratic' means 'in whom honour rules.'

[2] *Rep.* viii. 548 E–549 B.

[3] *Ib.* viii. 547 B–548 C.

the object, and the character or the constitution which seeks the end of life in wealth, as such, is called by Plato the 'oligarchic.' The vice of the oligarchic principle lies in the fact that, whereas the desire for wealth only justifies its place in human nature by submitting to be limited by the desire for the good of the whole man[1], it is here 'set upon a throne, while reason and spirit sit like slaves on either side.'[2] This new elevation of a secondary into a primary end goes along with an increase of disorganization and consequently of weakness. The oligarchic man is 'sparing and industrious; he satisfies only the necessary appetites; on the others, which he considers frivolous, he will spend nothing, but represses them. He is a dry sort of person, who saves on everything and is always making a purse, and the world speaks well of him. If you want to see his bad side, watch him when he is made a guardian of orphans, and can do wrong with impunity; then you will see that the self-control which he shows in ordinary business, where credit is to be got by honesty, is not the result of reason and principle, but of the forcible repression of his bad by his respectable desires; it is his property that he trembles for. . . . Thus he is not really one man but two; and, though his life is more orderly than that of many, he is far from having the true virtue of a soul at unity with itself. In the honourable competition of public life he is not a formidable antagonist; he does not want to spend money on such things, and he is afraid to wake his expensive appetites and enlist them on his side; and so he goes into battle with a fraction of his forces, and gets beaten and rich.'[3]

[1] *Rep.* ix. 591 D–E; cp. iv. 421 D–E. [2] *Ib.* viii. 553 C.
[3] *Ib.* viii. 554 A–555 A.

The dominion of appetite having now begun, the further phases of decline will be the lower phases of the appetitive nature itself. The first is that in which the desire for wealth has given way to the desire for freedom, the 'oligarchic' to the 'democratic' spirit. The essence of the latter, as understood by Plato, is that it asserts the principle of absolute liberty and equality: of liberty, in the sense that every one is free to do what he pleases; of equality, in the sense that every one is equal to every one else in every thing. Negatively, it is the spirit which repudiates all law, order, and rule as a restraint upon free human nature, and all distinctions of better and worse as an infringement of the abstract equality of rights. The phase which it represents in the progress of evil is that of an equilibrium of conflicting appetites. The decent but uninteresting order due to the concentrated pursuit of wealth has broken up, but no new dominion has as yet asserted itself, and there intervenes a stage of brilliant anarchy. Its principle is to have no principle, to deny all distinctions of good and bad, necessary and unnecessary, to abandon oneself to the pleasure which the 'lot' of circumstance brings. The 'democratic' man 'passes his life in satisfying the appetite of the moment; one day he drenches himself in wine and music, the next he pines on cold water; sometimes he is athletic, sometimes he is lazy and will do nothing, sometimes he takes a spell of philosophy; often he turns politician, and jumps up with the first idea that comes to his hand; if soldiering happen to strike his fancy, he takes to that; if commerce, to that. His life is under no order or necessity, but he calls it pleasant, free, and delightful, and he lives no other.'[1]

[1] *Rep.* viii. 561 C–D.

The development of evil is completed when, from the rule of the few respectable appetites and the anarchy of the many indiscriminate, we pass to the autocracy of one. As Plato found in the love of wealth the core of the oligarchic spirit, and in the love of abstract freedom that of the democratic, so in sheer selfishness, the simple craving for the pleasures of satisfied desire, he finds the moral embryo of the tyrant. And as the 'oligarchic' and 'democratic' men tend, under favourable circumstances, to produce oligarchies and democracies, because the theory of those constitutions is already the theory of their own lives, so the 'tyrannical' man has in him the making of a political tyrant, because he is already 'tyrannized over' by one of his own passions. Plato had before divided appetites into 'necessary' and 'unnecessary'; he now further distinguishes in the latter a class of 'lawless' appetites, which are born in every one, but may be got rid of or repressed. These are the 'wild-beast' element in human nature, which cannot be 'tamed' or made serviceable for life, but is essentially inorganic and destructive. They make themselves felt in dreams, when the higher nature is asleep, and shame and reason have lost their sway over the imagination. Plato represents the possession by them as a sort of madness, akin to other forms of morbid self-consciousness[1]. It is one of these appetites, lust, whose sole dominion makes the 'tyrannical' man. As the dominant passion grows, it breeds new wants, which clamour for food; they have to be satisfied at any cost; first the family property is attacked, and when that source is drained crime begins. If there are only a few such men

[1] *Rep.* ix. 571 A–572 B; cp. ix. 587 C, 580 B–D, and 573 B–C, 577 D, 578 A.

in a state, they take service with some foreign despot or become common criminals; if they are numerous, the most 'tyrannical' of them becomes a tyrant, and realizes the ideal of evil by converting into a waking truth the bestiality of dreams. Instead of being one with his fellow-men, he is now their natural enemy; instead of being his own best friend, he has enslaved what is highest in him to what is lowest; he seems to be an autocrat, but, if you think of his whole soul, no one does less what he wishes; he lives for the satisfaction of desire, and yet he is always in the pangs of longing and remorse. Thus does Plato conceive that, as the noblest powers in the soul do not find their fullest exercise except in a community which they can serve by ruling, and as a man attains the summit of his being when he can feel that 'nothing but his body is his own' and yet that he is the happiest of men, so, conversely, the lowest depth is not reached until he who is tyrannized over by his own vilest passions is placed in a position where he can ruin thousands to satisfy them, and can feel that he is absolutely friendless and alone in the moment when he is saying, 'I am the state.'

The combinations of circumstances under which Plato represents these various characters as developing are all typical and full of interest, but it is only possible here to notice one or two of their characteristic features. The first thing which strikes us is the prominence given to the law of reaction: 'it is the tendency of any excess to produce a change in the opposite direction; this is true of seasons, of plants, of animal bodies, and not least of political constitutions[1].' Thus the father who abstains from politics because of their bad tone has a son who

[1] *Rep.* viii. 563 E.

throws himself headlong into the competition for power[1]. The self-contained and timid money-maker is the heir of a man who has wrecked his all upon a political rock[2]. The 'democratic' man, who is 'everything by turns and nothing long,' is the sobered result of a reaction against the niggard monotony in which he has been brought up[3]; and the same reaction, not sobered down, but intensified, produces the 'tyrannical' man, the slave of a single passion[4].

Another noticeable point is the way in which, as the soul loses its inner unity, it becomes more the prey of external circumstances. The oligarchy falls by faction aided by another state[5]; the soul of the democratic man is fought over by rival claimants[6]; and the passion which seals the fate of the tyrannical man is manufactured for him by a society which is afraid that he is slipping out of its hands[7]. As the intrinsic goodness of a thing, body or soul, plant, animal, or work of art, is tested by its power of resisting external influences[8], so 'the unhealthy body or state wants but a slight impulse from without to make it ill, and sometimes even falls ill of itself.'[9]

Lastly, it is characteristic of Plato to represent evil as beginning at the top and working downwards. As long as the highest elements in a man or a community are at their best, there is no fear of faction or weakness below them[10]; but as soon as they begin to lose their singleness of purpose, and to let their work pass to other and inferior agents, the disturbance of function is felt through the whole organism, and not only do the higher

[1] *Rep.* viii. 549 C–550 B. [2] *Ib.* viii. 553 A–C. [3] *Ib.* viii. 559 D, 561 A.
[4] *Ib.* ix. 572 C ff. [5] *Ib.* viii. 556 E. [6] *Ib.* viii. 559 E–560 B, 561 B.
[7] *Ib.* ix. 572 E–573 A. [8] *Ib.* ii. 380 E ff. [9] *Ib.* viii. 556 E.
[10] *Ib.* viii. 545 D; cp. iv. 442 A; v. 465 B.

elements themselves sink to a lower level, but the lower ones which take their place, deprived of their natural guidance and support, lose force and unity at the very time that they seem to be gaining them. Thus it is that, at almost every fresh step in decline, Plato notices as one of the prime causes of this decline 'want of education,' meaning by 'education' all those spiritual influences by which the higher nature is nourished and quickened, and without which it grows 'weak and deaf and blind.'[1] It is this want which allows the spirited element to usurp the rule of reason, and personal distinction to take the place of truth and good as the object of life[2]; it is owing to this that a man falls under the external law of force instead of being a law to himself[3]; it is this which tends to brutalize chivalry, and lets the taint of avarice fasten on it and grow with age[4]. At a lower stage the same neglect of true culture, blinding the soul to higher things, leaves it to be led by the 'blind god' of wealth, while it allows the 'drone-like' passions to grow in secret under the cover of rich respectability, and then, in the absence of any higher motive to appeal to, necessitates their repression by force and fear[5]. Then, when the man who has never learnt to look at anything but the ground is introduced to the flashy brilliancy of fast society, the dull vacancy of his swept and garnished soul, where no true or noble idea has ever dwelt, becomes a home for the cynicism of the 'initiated' man of the world, and a breeding-place for 'lotus-eating' desire[6].

Having now followed to its conclusion Plato's conception of moral good and evil in the *Republic*, we have

[1] *Rep.* iii. 411 C–E. [2] *Ib.* viii. 546 D. [3] *Ib.* viii. 548 B.
[4] *Ib.* viii. 549 A–B. [5] *Ib.* viii. 554 B–D. [6] *Ib.* viii. 559 D–560 E.

shortly to notice its most characteristic features, and to supplement it here and there from other dialogues. The account of ideal goodness and the ideal good is the expansion and culmination of that view of life which, as we have already seen, unites what are often distinguished as its moral and scientific aspects. The 'philosophic' life is represented as the highest because it is the most reasonable, because it is inspired by the desire to be at one with truth and fact, because it is lived in the ever-present sense of man's place in the eternal order of the world. And the 'idea of good,' the apprehension of which is the summit of human attainment and well-being, is the principle of that eternal order, the condition of truth and fact, the ultimate postulate to which a rational interpretation of the world leads. It might seem accordingly that Plato's conception of moral perfection is fairly summed up in such words as 'enlightenment' or 'culture.' But when we turn to his own statements we find them transfused with an element which recalls Isaiah or St. Paul, rather than the cool light of the eighteenth century or the tempered enthusiasm of the nineteenth. The 'dialectical' impulse is described by him in the language of religious rapture; the 'unconditioned first principle' of knowledge is clothed in the attributes of a divine personality; and the practice and aims of the votary of science are distinguished from those of ordinary men by that indefinable quality which we can only call spiritual. In a word, philosophy is here religion. Four centuries later the windy subtleties of a bastard Greek 'wisdom' could be held up in contrast with the 'foolishness' which is the 'power of God'[1]; but here, in the heart and on the lips of Plato, the 'love of

[1] 1 *Cor.* i. 22-25.

wisdom' is itself that divine foolishness, that strength in weakness, before which the cunning of the world and the pageantry of power fade and are discomfited.

It is necessary to dwell a little upon this fact, and to see how Plato conceived the 'philosophy' which could thus transfigure life and raise morality to its highest power. When we speak now of 'love of truth,' we usually think of it as one among the other qualities proper to the scientific or historical investigator, but hardly as the pregnant source of all virtue. Only now and then, when some one lives and dies for a theory or a discovery, and in the simple absorption in one object seems to be lifted above the reach of ordinary weaknesses and temptations, do we catch something of Plato's meaning. To him it seemed as if the desire for truth was the only basis of a perfectly disinterested morality. The philosopher is untroubled by sensuality or avarice, not because he represses them for fear of consequences, but because he desires something better than they can give, and the other channels of his appetites run dry[1]. He alone can afford to despise the profits of political power, because he alone is rich in the real wealth, the 'divine gold.'[2] The idea thus suggested in the *Republic* is more fully expressed in the *Phaedo*[3]. The life of the true philosopher, we are there told, is a dying to the body that he may live to the soul; a concentration of himself upon truth and reality; a disengagement, as far as is practicable, from the hindrances, the illusions, the distractions, which physical wants bring with them; it is, in fact, a foretaste of that freedom to which he looks forward after death,

[1] *Rep.* vi. 485 D. [2] *Ib.* vii. 521 A–B; iii. 416 E.
[3] 64 A–69 E.

when he hopes to see with purified eyes the truth in its purity. Death, therefore, which is terrible to others, is to him the release from bondage, and the entrance to communion with the truth which he had loved on earth. It is this love alone which can make virtue quite genuine. Ordinary people face certain dangers to avoid some worse evil, or abstain from certain pleasures to gain other pleasures; their courage is a kind of fear, their continence a kind of incontinence. But it is a 'shallow and slavish' morality which thus barters pleasure for pleasure, pain for pain; wisdom is the only true 'coin' of virtue, and, unless we get that, we get nothing for what we give. Passages like this naturally suggest the word 'asceticism,' and, if asceticism means the disciplined effort to attain an end which cannot be attained without giving up many things often considered desirable, the philosophic life is ascetic; but, if it means giving up for the sake of giving up, there is no asceticism in Plato. It is natural that in the *Phaedo* the negative result of the desire for truth, indifference to much which goes to make up ordinary life, should be prominent; but the ground of the indifference, both there and in the *Republic*, is represented as devotion to an object which fills and absorbs the soul.

But it may be asked, how does this object differ from other objects of absorbing interest? Do not the miser and the athlete also forgo much of what is usually esteemed enjoyment? What is 'truth' that it should be placed in this unique position, as the one thing intrinsically worth living for; or 'wisdom,' that it should claim to be the only genuine 'coin' of virtue? It is clear that when Plato spoke of wisdom and truth in this way he was not thinking of the mere acquisition

of knowledge, in the ordinary sense of scientific or historical information. He explicitly dismisses the theory that knowledge can be the end of life, unless it be knowledge of the Good. Yet it is insisted on as characteristic of the philosophic nature to welcome every fragment of knowledge, great or small, high or low, 'which reveals in any way the eternal being of things[1].' Knowledge, as we have seen, is to Plato the apprehension of things in their true relations; each fact is what it is from its place in the whole; truth is one and coherent, though man has to learn it as a manifold which he can never fully piece together. In this unity he and his life are an element, and to know the truth is to see himself as he really is; to see, in modern phraseology, the ultimate conditions and bearings of his life and actions. All knowledge has an intrinsic value which contributes to this end; and, as no part of truth is absolutely isolated, there is no real knowledge which cannot be made to contribute to it, which may not help to fill in the outline of life, and which is not therefore, if rightly looked at, a knowledge of the Good. And this brings us to the second way in which Plato represents the influence of philosophy upon character and conduct. It not only concentrates desire, it also widens the view of the issues of life. Because each point of reality is a centre with an infinite circumference, the philosopher is perpetually being carried beyond the apparent fact, and ignoring the conventional proportions of things. In the 'vision of all time and all being' he sees human life shrink into nothingness, and cannot be afraid to die. His soul 'reaches out after all that is divine and human,' and he is lifted above the pettinesses of everyday life. He dwells in spirit in a world of eternal

[1] *Rep.* vi. 485 B.

order, where nothing does or suffers wrong, and human litigation seems to him a fighting about shadows [1].

It is just this sense of the infinite conditions which make up any fact, of the infinite issues involved in any action, which gives the philosopher that appearance of unpracticalness which was as notable in Plato's time as in our own. The very penetration of vision which makes ordinary minds seem to him only half awake makes him seem to them a dreamer. In the *Republic* Plato has emphasized the evils of this mutual misunderstanding, and has pointed the way to a reconciliation [2]. In the *Gorgias* [3] we saw philosophy described by the man of the world as a useful part of every gentleman's education, but the ruin of practical capacity and success if seriously pursued; while to the philosopher himself it is the living spirit of truth and principle, in the strength of which he defies the 'political' spirit which can only gloze and flatter, and appeals from the judge who can kill the body to the divine judge before whom politician and philosopher alike must give account of their lives. In the *Theaetetus* [4] an analogous antithesis is drawn in a somewhat lighter vein. The practical incapacity of the philosopher is triumphantly admitted, and his life is contrasted with that of the *habitué* of the law-courts as the life of freedom with that of slavery. The former desires only to get at the truth; if he can do this, he does not care whether he has to use few words or many. The latter always speaks under pressure; he is cramped by time, by the terms of the indictment, by the absolutism of the judge, perhaps by fear for his own life. And so he becomes eager and sharp, and in self-defence he

[1] *Rep.* vi. 486 A–B, 500 B–C; vii. 517 D–E. [2] *Ib.* vi. 498 C–500 E.
[3] Above, p. 291 ff. [4] 172 C–177 C.

learns the arts of flattery, deception, and revenge, and this stops the free growth of his soul, which becomes dwarfed and crooked and crumpled.

As for the philosopher, 'from boyhood he has never known the way to the market-place, or where the court or council-room or other public buildings are. Laws and decrees he neither hears nor reads. Political meetings and cabals, dinner-parties and revels with flute-girls, never occur to him even in a dream. He is as unconscious of the family affairs of people in his town as of the number of gallons in the sea. He does not even know that he does not know these things, for it is not to gain credit that he keeps out of them; but the truth is that only his body stays at home in the city, while his mind, despising such trifles, is "all over the world," as Pindar says, "measuring the depths and surface of the earth and the stars in heaven above," searching into the whole nature of everything everywhere, and not condescending to what is near. It is like the story of Thales, how he was looking at the stars and fell into a well, and a charming and witty Thracian maid-servant jeered at him and said he wanted to know what was up in the sky, and could not see what was on the ground in front of him. This joke will serve for all who spend their lives in philosophy. They really not only do not know what their neighbours are doing, they hardly know whether they are human creatures or not; all their attention is taken up with such questions as what man is, and what are the specific properties of his nature. And so when one of them goes into society or public life, and has to speak about things which are "at his feet and before his eyes," he is the laughing-stock, not only of Thracian maid-servants, but of anybody and everybody;

he tumbles into wells and all sorts of dilemmas in his inexperience; his awkwardness is frightful, and gives the impression that he is an idiot. But the tables are turned when he has dragged you up into his own world, and got you to leave such questions as, What wrong have I done you, or you me? or, Does much money make a king happy? and to turn to the investigation of justice and injustice in themselves, and their difference from other things and each other, or of kingship and of human happiness and misery in general, what they are and how human nature must get the one and escape the other. Then the man of the little, keen, legal soul gives the philosopher his revenge: as he hangs aloft and looks down through mid-air from the unaccustomed height, he grows dizzy and distressed, he falters and stammers, and is a laughing-stock, not to Thracian maids or any other uneducated persons, for they have not the eyes to see, but to every one who has not been brought up like a slave.'

The moral effects of the philosophic spirit, thus far considered, may be summed up as a disinterested concentration of purpose, and a vivid realization of the ultimate bearings of action. A third effect, equally characteristic of Plato's conception, is the unconscious imitation of the object which the philosopher pursues, and in the presence of which he lives. True knowledge to Plato is, as has been seen, one, and the highest one, of the activities in which the soul goes out into communion with its own higher self, with the divine soul which animates the world. 'It is in the nature of the true lover of learning,' we are told[1], 'to be ever

[1] *Rep.* vi. 490 A–B.

struggling up to being, and not to abide amongst the manifold and particular objects of opinion. He will go on his way, and the edge of his love will not grow dull or its force abate, until he has got hold of the essential nature of the thing with that part of his soul to which it belongs so to do; and that is the part which is akin to being. With this he will draw near, and mingle being with being, and beget intelligence and truth, and find knowledge and true life and nourishment, and then and not till then he will cease from his travail.' In this communion with the reality or divine order the soul grows into likeness with it, and becomes itself, 'as far as man can, orderly and divine'; for 'he who lives in fellowship with that which he admires cannot help imitating it[1].'

A similar idea is applied in the *Timaeus*[2], in connexion with some crude physiology, to give a spiritual motive to the study of the laws of nature. 'The highest element in the soul is given to each man by God to be his guardian spirit. It dwells at the top of the body, lifting us up from the earth to our kindred in heaven; for we are heavenly, not earthly, plants; and the divine element within us attaches our head and root to the place from which the soul originally sprang, and keeps the whole body upright. When therefore a man devotes himself to his appetites or his ambitions, all his beliefs must be mortal, and he himself will succeed in making himself as mortal as possible by thus developing his mortality. But if a man care most about his love of knowledge and his true thoughts, and practise these the most, he cannot fail of having immortal and divine ideas

[1] *Rep.* vi. 500 C. [2] 90 A–D.

so far as he gets hold of the truth, and he will attain that measure of immortality of which human nature is capable, while his constant tending of the divine element, and the order and harmony of his indwelling spirit, will give him exceeding happiness. There is only one way of tending a thing, to give it its proper nurture and motions; and motions akin to the divine in us are the thoughts and revolutions of the universe. Every man therefore should follow these, correcting the perverted motions in his head by studying the harmonies and revolutions of the universe, and so bring his mind, according to its original nature, into likeness with its object. To attain that likeness is to attain in its fulness, both now and hereafter, the best life which the gods have set before men.'

The divine perfection, assimilation to which is the height of human happiness, is conceived by Plato in the passages just referred to as the being or order of the world, which is also its life or soul. It is this living order or constitution of things which he speaks of in the *Republic*[1] as the 'pattern' or ideal 'polity,' 'laid up in heaven,' to which a man may look for guidance, and of which he may make himself a citizen. And, as Plato conceives the universal order or 'cosmos' to be the creation and expression of the divine nature, we shall not be surprised to find him in the *Theaetetus*[2] describing the ideal human life as the imitation of God. 'Evil can never perish; there must always be something opposed to good; nor can it have its seat amongst the gods, but it must needs haunt human nature and this world of ours. Therefore we must endeavour to fly away to

[1] ix. 592 B. [2] 176 A–177 A.

the other world as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God as far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become wise in justice and righteousness. It is very hard to make people believe that the motive for flying from vice and pursuing virtue is not, as is generally said, that we may be thought good and not be thought bad; that is all an "old wives' tale"; the truth is this. God is not unjust in any way, but absolutely just, and there is nothing more like him than one of us who is perfectly just. It is here that a man shows whether he is really able, or whether he is an imbecile. To know this is wisdom and true virtue; not to know it is ignorance and palpable vice. All other so-called ability and wisdom is common and base; common in politics, base in art. If then a man is unjust and unrighteous in word or deed he had much better not admit that his knavery makes him an able man; for, as it is, men glory in their shame, and fancy that people are saying of them that they are no fools "cumbering the earth," but the sort of men whom the state ought not to let die. They must therefore be told the truth, that they are the very opposite of what they suppose, just because they suppose it. They are ignorant of the real punishment of injustice—the last thing a man should be ignorant of. That punishment is not, as they fancy, stripes and death, which may be inflicted on the innocent; it is one which they cannot possibly escape. They do not see that there are two patterns set in the world, the godlike ideal of bliss, and the godless ideal of misery; and in their folly and madness they become, without knowing it, like the one and unlike the other by doing injustice. Thus their condemnation is to live a life like that which they resemble. And yet, if we tell

them that, unless they give up being so clever, the other world, which is unpolluted by evil, will not receive them, while in this world they will walk for ever with their own likeness, evil with evil, we shall seem to them to be simpletons talking to experienced men of the world.'

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